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Assembly Proceedings

Official Report

Bengal Legislative Assembly

Fifteenth Session, 1943

The 12th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th, 22nd, 23rd. and 24th February, 1943.

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GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL.

GOVERNOR OF BENGAL.

His Excellency Sir JOHN ARTHUR HERBERT, G.C.I.E.

MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS.

(1) The Hon'ble Mr. ABUL KASEM FAZLUL HUQ, in charge of the Finance, Home and Publicity Departments.

(2) The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca, in charge of the Departments of Industries, Commerce and Labour.

(3) The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU, in charge of the Department of Public Health and Local Self-Government.

(4) The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM, in charge of the Education Department.

(5) The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE, in charge of the Revenue Department and of the Judicial and Legislative Departments.

(6) The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN, in charge of the Agriculture, Co-operative Credit and Rural Indebtedness Departments.

(7) The Hon'ble Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED, in charge of the Department of Communications and Works.

(8) The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN, in charge of the Forests and Excise Department.

BENGAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS OF THE BENGAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

SPEAKER.

The Hon'ble Mr. SYED NAUSHER ALI.

DEPUTY SPEAKER.

SYED JALALUDDIN HASHEMY, Esq.

SECRETARY.

K. ALI AFZAL, Esq., Barrister-at-law.

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS.

A

Abdul Aziz, Maulana Md. [Narayanganj East (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Hafiz, Mr. Mirza. [Tangail West (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Hafiz Mia, Mr. [Kurigram South (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Hakeem, Mr. [Khulna (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Hakim, Maulvi. [Mymensingh West (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Hakim Vikrampuri, Maulvi Md. [Munshiganj (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Hamid, Mr. A. M. [Pabna West (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Hamid Shah, Maulvi. [Kishoreganj North (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Jabbar, Maulvi. [Dinajpur Central East (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Jabbar Palwan, Mr. Md. [Jamalpur North (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Kader, Mr. [Patuakhali South (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Karim, Mr. [Jamalpur *cum* Muktagacha (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Latif Biswas, Maulvi. [Manikganj West (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Majid, Maulvi. [Mymensingh North (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Majid, Mr. Syed. [Noakhali South (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Motaleb Malik, Dr. [Nadia East (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Wahab Khan, Mr. [Bakarganj West (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Wahed, Maulvi. [Mymensingh East (Muhammadan).]
Abdulla-Al Mahmood, Mr. [Serajganj North (Muhammadan).]
Abdur Rahman, Khan Bahadur A. F. M. [24-Parganas North-East (Muhammadan).]
Abdur Rahman Siddiqi, Mr. (Muslim Chamber of Commerce.)
Abdur Rasheed, Maulvi Md. [Birbhum (Muhammadan).]

Abdur Raschid Mahmood, Mr. [Serajganj North (Muhammadan).]
Abdur Rauf, Khan Bahadur Maulvi S. [Howrah (Muhammadan).]
Abdur Rauf, Khan Bahadur Shah. [Rangpur South (Muhammadan).]
Abdur Razzak, Maulvi. [Feni (Muhammadan).]
Abdus Shaheed, Maulvi Md. [Dacca North Central (Muhammadan).]
Abidur Reza Chowdhury, Khan Bahadur Maulvi. [Chandpur West (Muhammadan).]
Abu Hossain Sarkar, Maulvi. [Gaibandha North (Muhammadan).]
Abul Fazl, Mr. Muhammad [Madaripur West (Muhammadan).]
Abul Hashim, Maulvi. [Burdwan (Muhammadan).]
Abul Hosain Ahmed, Mr. [Netrokona North (Muhammadan).]
Abul Masud, Maulvi Kazi. [Nator (Muhammadan).]
Abul Quasem, Maulvi. [Hooghly (Muhammadan).]
Acharyya Choudhury, Maharaja Sashi Kanta, of Muktagacha, Mymensingh. (Dacca Landholders.)
Aftab Ali, Mr. (Water Transport Trade Union.)
Ahmed Ali Enayetpuri, Khan Bahadur Maulana. [Jhenidah (Muhammadan).]
Ahmed Ali Mridha, Maulvi. [Goalundo (Muhammadan).]
Ahmed Hosain, Mr. [Gaibandha South (Muhammadan).]
Ahmed Khan, Mr. Syed. [Noakhali South (Muhammadan).]
Alfazuddin Ahmed, Khan Bahadur Maulvi. [Midnapore (Muhammadan).]
Aminullah, Khan Sahib Maulvi. [Noakhali Central (Muhammadan).]
Amir Ali Mia, Maulvi Md. [Rajshahi South (Muhammadan).]
Anwarul Azim, Khan Bahadur Md. [Chittagong South (Muhammadan).]
Asimuddin Ahmed, Mr. [Tippera Central (Muhammadan).]
Aulad Hossain Khan, Khan Bahadur Maulvi. [Manikganj East (Muhammadan).]
Azhar Ali, Maulvi. [Pabna East (Muhammadan).]
Azizul Haque, Sir Muhammad, C.I.E., Khan Bahadur. [Nadia West (Muhammadan).]

B

Badrudduja, Mr. Syed. [Berhampore (Muhammadan).]
Banerjee, the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath. [Burdwan North-West (General).]
Banerjee, Mr. Sibnath. [Howrah (Registered Factories).]
Banerjee, Dr. Suresh Chandra. [Calcutta and Suburbs (Registered Factories).]
Banerji, Mr. P. [24-Parganas North-West (General).]
Banerji, Mr. Satya Priya. [Rajshahi (General).]
Barat Ali, Mr. Mohammad. [Serajganj Central (Muhammadan).]
Barma, Babu Premhari. [Dinajpur (General).]
Barma, Mr. Puspajit. [Rangpur (General).]
Barman, Babu Shyama Prosad. [Dinajpur (General).]
Barman, the Hon'ble Mr. Upendra Nath. [Jalpaiguri *cum* Siliguri (General).]

Basu, Mr. Jatindra Nath. [Calcutta North (General).]
Basu, the Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar. [Calcutta East (General).]
Bell-Hart, Miss P. B. (Anglo-Indian Constituency.)
Bhowmik, Dr. Gobinda Chandra. [Midnapore East (General).]
Birkmyre, Sir Henry, Bart. [Hooghly *cum* Howrah (European).]
Biswas, Babu Lakshmi Narayan. [Nadia (General).]
Biswas, Mr. Rasik Lal. [Jessore (General).]
Biswas, Mr. Surendra Nath. [Faridpur (General).]
Bose, Mr. Sarat Chandra. [Calcutta South (General).]

C

Chakrabarty, Mr. Jatindra Nath. [Rangpur (General).]
Chakrabarty, Babu Narendra Narayan. [Bogra *cum* Pabna (General).]
Chattopadhyay, Mr. Haripada. [Nadia (General).]
Chaudhuri, Rai Harendra Nath. [24-Parganas Municipal (General).]
Chippendale, Mr. J. W. (Anglo-Indian.)
Clark, Mr. I. A. [Burdwan Division (European).]

D

Das, Babu Radha Nath. [Hooghly North-East (General).]
Das, Rai Sahib Anukul Chandra. [24-Parganas North-West (General).]
Das, Rai Sahib Kirit Bhusan. [Murshidabad (General).]
Das, Mr. Monomohan. [Mymensingh East (General).]
Dass, Babu Debendra Nath. [Birbhum (General).]
Das Gupta, Babu Khagendra Nath. [Jalpaiguri *cum* Siliguri (General).]
Das Gupta, Dr. J. M. [Calcutta Central (General).]
Das Gupta, Srijut Narendra Nath. [Bakarganj South-West (General).]
Datta, Mr. Dhirendra Nath. [Tippera (General).]
Dolui, Mr. Harendra Nath. [Jhargram *cum* Ghatal (General).]
Dutt, Mr. Sukumar. [Hooghly South-West (General).]
Dutta Gupta, Miss Mira. [Calcutta General (Women).]
Dutta Mazumdar, Mr. Niharendu. [Barrackpore (Registered Factories).]

E

Edbar, Mr. Upendranath. [Bakarganj South-West (General).]
Emdadul Haque, Kazi. [Kurigram North (Muhammadan).]

F

Farhad Raza Chowdhury, Mr. M. [Jangipur (Muhammadan).]
Farhat Bano Khanam, Begum. [Dacca (Muhammadan) Women.]
Fazlul Huq, the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. [Patuakhali North (Muhammadan).]
Fazlul Qadir, Khan Bahadur Maulvi. [Chittagong North-West (Muhammadan).]
Fazlur Rahman, Mr. [Jamalpur East (Muhammadan).]
Fazlur Rahman, Mr. (Dacca University.)

G

Ganguly, Mr. Pratul Chandra. [East Bengal Municipal (General).]
Ghose, Mr. Atul Krishna. [Jessore (General).]
Giasuddin Ahmed, Mr. [Jamalpur West (Muhammadan).]
Gladding, Mr. D., C.I.E. [Bengal Chamber of Commerce.]
Golam Rabbani Ahammad, Maulvi. [Dinajpur Central West (Muhammadan).]
Golam Sarwar Hosaini, Mr. Shah Syed. [Ramganj *cum* Raipur (Muhammadan).]
Gomes, Mr. R. A. [Dacca Division (Indian Christian).]
Goswami, Mr. Tulsi Chandra. [Burdwan Division North Municipal (General).]
Griffiths, Mr. C. (Anglo-Indian.)
Gupta, Mr. Jogesh Chandra. [Calcutta South Central (General).]
Gupta, Mr. J. N. [Railway Trade Union (Labour).]
Gurung, Mr. Damber Singh. [Darjeeling (General).]
Gyasuddin Ahmed Choudhury, Al-Hadj. [Madaripur East (Muhammadan).]

H

Habibullah, the Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur K., of Dacca. [Dacca Municipal (Muhammadan).]
Hafizuddin Choudhuri, Maulvi. [Thakurgaon (Muhammadan).]
Hamiduddin Ahmad, Khan Sahib. [Kishoreganj East (Muhammadan).]
Hamilton, Mr. K. A. (Calcutta Trades Association.)
Hasan Ali Chowdhury, Mr. Syed. [Tangail North (Muhammadan).]
Hasanuzzaman, Khan Sahib Maulvi Md. [Tippera South (Muhammadan).]
Hashem Ali Khan, the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi. [Bakarganj North (Muhammadan).]
Hasina Murshed, Mrs., M.B.E. (Parliamentary Secretary). [Calcutta (Muhammadan) Women.]
Hatemally Jamadar, Khan Sahib Maulvi. [Pirojpur South (Muhammadan).]
Haywood, Mr. Rogers. (Bengal Chamber of Commerce.)
Hendry, Mr. David. (Bengal Chamber of Commerce.)
Hirtzel, Mr. M. A. F., O.B.E. (Bengal Chamber of Commerce.)
Hodge, Mr. H. R. (Bengal Chamber of Commerce.)

I

Idris Ahmed Mia, Mr. [Malda South (Muhammadan).]
Ispahani, Mr. M. A. H., M.B.E. [Calcutta South (Muhammadan).]

J

Jalaluddin Ahmad, Khan Bahadur Maulvi. [Cox's Bazar (Muhammadan).]
Jalaluddin Hashemy, Mr. Syed. [Satkhira (Muhammadan).]

Jalan, Mr. I. D. [Calcutta West (General).]
Jasimuddin Ahmed, Khan Sahib Maulvi. [24-Parganas South (Muhammadan).]
Jonab Ali Majumdar, Maulvi. [Chandpur East (Muhammadan).]

K

Kabiruddin Khan, Khan Bahadur Maulvi. [Netrokona South (Muhammadan).]
Kazem Ali Mirza, Sahibzada Kawan Jah Syed. [Murshidabad South-West (Muhammadan).]
Kennedy, Mr. I. G. (Indian Jute Mills Association.)
Khaitan, Mr. Debi Prosad. (Indian Chamber of Commerce.)
Khan, Mr. Debendra Lall. [Midnapore Central (General).]
Kumar, Mr. Atul Chandra. [Malda (General.)]
Kundu, Mr. Nishitha Nath. [Dinajpur (General).]

L

Lahiri, Babu Ashutosh [North Bengal Municipal (General).]

M

MacGregor, Mr. G. G (Indian Tea Association.)
MacPherson, Mr. G. P [Rajshahi Division (European).]
Mafizuddin Ahmed, Dr. [Bogra North (Muhammadan).]
Mafizuddin Ahmed, Khan Sahib Maulvi. [Tippera North (Muhammadan).]
Vacant. [Balurghat (Muhammadan).]
Maguire, Mr. L. T. (Anglo-Indian.)
Mahtab, Maharajadhiraja Bahadur Uday Chand, of Burdwan. [Burdwan Central (General).]
Maiti, Mr. Nikunja Behari. [Midnapore South-East (General).]
Maji, Mr. Adwaita Kumar. [Burdwan Central (General).]
Majumdar, Mrs. Hemaprova. [Dacca (General) Women.]
Majumdar, Babu Jnanendra Chandra. [Mymensingh East Rural (General).]
Mal, Mr. Iswar Chandra. [Midnapore South-West (General).]
Mandal, Mr. Amrita Lal. [Mymensingh West (General).]
Mandal, Mr. Banku Behari. [Burdwan North-West (General).]
Mandal, Mr. Birat Chandra. [Faridpur (General).]
Mandal, Mr. Jagat Chandra. [Tippera (General).]
Mandal, Mr. Jogendra Nath. [Bakarganj North-East (General).]
Mandal, Mr. Krishna Prasad. [Midnapore Central (General).]
Maniruddin Akhand, Maulvi. [Rajshahi North (Muhammadan).]
Maniruzzaman Islamabadi, Maulana Md. [Chittagong South Central (Muhammadan).]
Maqbul Hosain, Mr. [Tippera North-East (Muhammadan).]

Masud Ali Khan Panni, Al-Hadj Maulvi. [Tangail South (Muhammadan).]
Miles, Mr. C. W. (Indian Tea Association.)
Mohammed Ali, Khan Bahadur. [Bogra West (Muhammadan).]
Mohsin Ali, Mr. Md. [Meherpur (Muhammadan).]
Mookerjee, Dr. Syamaprasad. (Calcutta University.)
Morgan, Mr. G., C.I.E. [Presidency Division (European).]
Moslem Ali Mollah, Maulvi M. [Rajshahi Central (Muhammadan).]
Mozammel Huq, Maulvi Md. [Bhola North (Muhammadan).]
Muhammad Afzal, Khan Bahadur Maulvi Syed. [Pirojpur North (Muhammadan).]
Muhammad Ibrahim, Maulvi. [Noakhali North (Muhammadan).]
Muhammad Ishaque, Maulvi. [Bogra South (Muhammadan).]
Muhammad Israil, Maulvi. [Kishoreganj South (Muhammadan).]
Muhammad Siddique, Khan Bahadur Dr. Syed. [Bankura Muhammadan).]
Muhammad Solaiman, Khan Bahadur Maulvi. [Barrackpore Municipal (Muhammadan).]
Mukerjea, Mr. Taraknath, M.B.E. (Burdwan Landholders' Constituency.)
Mukerji, Mr. Dhirendra Narayan. (Hooghly North-East.)
Mukherjee, Mr. B. [Colliery (Coal Mines) (Labour).]
Mukherji, Dr. H. C. [Calcutta *cum* Presidency Division (Indian Christian).]
Mukherji, Dr. Sharat Chandra. [Birbhum (General).]
Mullick, Srijut Ashutosh. [Bankura West (General).]
Mullick, Mr. Mukunda Behari. [Khulna (General).]
Mullick, Mr. Pulin Behary. [Howrah (General).]
Musharruff Hossain, Nawab, Khan Bahadur. [Jalpaiguri *cum* Darjeeling (Muhammadan).]
Mustagawsal Haque, Mr. Syed. [Bagerhat (Muhammadan).]
Mustafa Ali Dewan, Maulvi. [Brahmanbaria North (Muhammadan).]

N

Nandy, Maharaja Srischandra, of Cossimbazar. (Presidency Landholders.)
Nasarullah, Nawabzada K. [Brahmanbaria South (Muhammadan).]
Nasker, Mr. Hem Chandra. [24-Parganas South-East (General).]
Nausher Ali, The Hon'ble Mr. Syed. [Jessore Sadar (Muhammadan).]
Nazimuddin, Khwaja Sir, K.C.I.E. [Calcutta North (Muhammadan).]
Nooruddin, Mr. K. [Hooghly *cum* Howrah Municipal (Muhammadan).]
Norton, Mr. H. R., M.B.E. (Calcutta Trades Association.)

P

Pain, Mr. Barada Prosanna. [Hooghly *cum* Howrah Municipal (General).]
Paul, Sir Hari Sankar. (Bengal National Chamber of Commerce.)
Poddar, Mr. Anandilall. (Marwari Association.)

Powell, Mr. J. A. [Calcutta and Suburbs (European).]
Pramanik, Mr. Tarinicharan. [Malda (General).]

R

Rahman, Khan Bahadur A. M. L. [Rajshahi Central (Muhammadan).]
Raikut, Mr. Prasanna Deb. [Jalpaiguri *cum* Siliguri (General).]
Rajibuddin Tarafdar, Maulvi. [Bogra East (Muhammadan).]
Razimuddin Ahmed, Mr. [Tippera West (Muhammadan).]
Razaur Rahman Khan, Mr. [Dacca South Central (Muhammadan).]
Roy, Mr. Charu Chandra. [Mymensingh West (General).]
Roy, Mr. Dhananjoy. [Dacca East (General).]
Roy, Mr. Kamalkrishna. [Bankura East (General).]
Roy, Mr. Kiran Sankar. [Dacca West (General).]
Roy, Mr. Kishori Pati. [Jhargram *cum* Ghatal (General).]
Roy, Rai Bahadur Kshirod Chandra. (Chittagong Landholders.)
Roy, Mr. Manmatha Nath. [Howrah (General).]
Roy, Mr. Patiram. [Khulna (General).]
Roy, Kumar Shib Shekhareswar. (Rajshahi Landholders.)

S

Sadaruddin Ahmed, Mr. [Bakarganj South (Muhammadan).]
Safiruddin Ahmed, Haji. [Rangpur North (Muhammadan).]
Sahabe Alum, Mr. Syed [Dacca Central (Muhammadan).]
Salim, Mr. S. A. [Narayanganj North (Muhammadan).]
Sanaullah, Dr. [Chittagong North-East (Muhammadan).]
Sanyal, Dr. Nalinaksha. [Presidency Division Municipal (General).]
Sanyal, Mr. Sasanka Sekhar. [Murshidabad (General).]
Sarker, Babu Madhusudan. [Bogra *cum* Pabna (General).]
Sen, Mr. Atul Chandra. [Dacca East (General).]
Sen, Mr. Dhirendra Nath. (Bengal National Chamber of Commerce.)
Sen, Rai Bahadur Jogesh Chandra. [24-Parganas South-East (General).]
Sen, Babu Nagendra Nath. [Khulna (General).]
Sen Gupta, Mrs Nellie. [Chittagong (General).]
Serajul Islam, Mr. [Bongaon (Muhammadan).]
Shahabuddin, Mr. Khwaja, C.B.E. [Narayanganj South (Muhammadan).]
Shahedali, Mr. [Matlabbazar (Muhammadan).]
Shamsuddin Ahmed, the Hon'ble Mr. [Kusthia (Muhammadan).]
Shamsuddin Ahmed Khondkar, Mr. [Gopalganj (Muhammadan).]
Shamsul Huda, Maulana. [Mymensingh South (Muhammadan).]
Singha, Babu Kshetra Nath. [Rangpur (General).]
Sinha, Srijut Manindra Bhusan. [Bankura West (General).]
Sirdar, Babu Litta Munda. [Bengal Dooars (Western) Tea Garden Labour.]
Skipwith, Mr. W. E. [Calcutta and Suburbs (European).]
Smyth-Osbourne, Mr. D. G. [Darjeeling (European).]
Speller, Mr. J. H. [Calcutta and Suburbs (European).]

Stark, Mr. A. F. [Calcutta and Suburbs (European).]
Steven, Mr. J. W. R. [Dacca (European).]
Suhrawardy, Mr. H. S. [24-Parganas Municipal (Muhammadan).]
Sur, Mr. Harendra Kumar. [Noakhali (General).]

T

Tamizuddin Khan, Mr. [Faridpur West (Muhammadan).]
Thakur, Mr. Promatha Ranjan. [Faridpur (General).]
Thorman, Mr. C. M. [Chittagong Division (European).]
Tofel Ahmed Choudhury, Maulvi Haji. [Bhola South (Muhammadan).]

W

Waliur Rahman, Maulvi. [Jessore East (Muhammadan).]
Walker, Mr. J. R. (Bengal Chamber of Commerce.)
Walker, Mr. W. A. M., C.B.E. (Indian Jute Mills Association.)
Whitehead, Mr. R. B. (Indian Mining Association.)
Wordsworth, Mr. W. C., C.I.E. (Bengal Chamber of Commerce.)

Y

Yousuf Mirza. [24-Parganas Central (Muhammadan).]
Yusuf Ali Choudhury, Mr. [Faridpur East (Muhammadan).]

Z

Zahur Ahmed Choudhury, Maulvi. [Malda North (Muhammadan).]
Zaman, Mr. A. M. A. [Hooghly *cum* Serampore (Registered Factories) Labour.]

THE BENGAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PROCEEDINGS

Official Report of the Fifteenth Session.

Volume LXIV--No. 1.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the Provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Friday, the 12th February, 1943, at 4-15 p.m.

Present:

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. SYED JALALUDDIN HASHIMY) in the Chair, 8 Hon'ble Ministers and 190 members.

Obituary.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Ladies and gentlemen, you are aware of the sad and untimely death of the Hon'ble Mr. Satyendra Chandra Mitra, President, Bengal Legislative Council. It is also my sad and melancholy duty to refer to the deaths of Sir Manmatha Nath Mukherjee, Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, Mr. Mafizuddin Choudhury, a sitting member of this House, Major Curtis Millar, an ex-member of this House, and of Sir Thomas Lamb who died two days ago.

Mr. Mitra was ailing for some time past and died on the 27th October, 1942, at his Calcutta residence.

You had elected him as a member of the Bengal Legislative Council in 1937 where he was elevated to the Chair. He discharged his arduous and responsible duties with great credit.

He began his political career as a member of the old Bengal Legislative Council. Later he was elected a member of the Indian Legislative Assembly He served as a member on the Age of Consent Committee and was a Director of the Reserve Bank of India, Eastern Circle. His premature death is a great loss to the Province.

Sir Manmatha Nath Mukherjee breathed his last on the 6th December, 1942. An eminent jurist as he was, he became a Judge of the Calcutta High Court and worked in that capacity for 12 years. He officiated twice as the Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court. He also worked as the officiating Law Member of the Government of India. His death has taken away one of the best and brightest luminaries from this Province of Bengal.

Sir Sikandar died suddenly on the 26th December, 1942. The news of his death was received all over India with deepest regrets by all communities. An astute politician and a man of high intellectual calibre he was universally respected. During his lifetime he held the highest offices including the Governorship of the Punjab. He took keen interest in the war efforts of

his province, and visited the Indian soldiers in the Near East on several occasions. The sudden death of this soldier-premier of the Punjab has cut short an illustrious career.

Maulvi Mafizuddin Choudhury died on the 22nd November, 1942, at his native place. He was a member of the Assembly from the beginning of the new Constitution representing Balurghat (Muhammadan) Constituency. In him this Assembly has lost a valuable member whose manners and temperament won the heart and admiration of all who knew him.

Major Millar was killed in an aeroplane accident on his way from India to London on Military duty. He was elected member of the Assembly from the beginning of the present Reforms and resigned only at the outbreak of this war to take up military duties. He was the Chief Whip and Secretary to the European Group in the Assembly. He impressed all who came in contact with him by his courteous and amiable behaviour.

Sir Thomas Lamb was a member of the old Bengal Legislative Council and after the inauguration of the Reforms was elected by this House to the Bengal Legislative Council. He was actively associated with many social institutions of this city and took a great deal of interest in the welfare of the land of his domicile.

I feel that a message of condolence should be sent to the bereaved families, and I hope members will signify their assent by rising in their seats.

(Members then rose in their seats.)

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, Secretary will do the needful.

Panel of Chairmen.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: In accordance with the provisions of rule 6 of the Bengal Legislative Assembly Procedure Rules, I nominate the following members of the Assembly to form a panel of four Chairmen for the ensuing session:—

(1) Mr. Kiron Sankar Roy.
(2) Mr. David Hendry.
(3) Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee.
(4) Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin, K.C.I.E.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Special grant for teachers of schools and colleges in Calcutta.

*1. **Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the Government have sanctioned five lakhs of rupees for payment of salaries to the staff of the affiliated educational institutions of the city of Calcutta?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason thereof?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the number of (1) schools and (2) colleges which will be awarded this grant;

(*ii*) the conditions under which the amount will be paid; and

(*iii*) the number of the members of the staff of the various institutions who will be paid out of this amount showing separately the number of them that are (1) Hindus, (2) Scheduled Castes, and (3) Muslims?

MINISTER in charge of the EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. Abdul Karim): (*a*) A sum of Rs. 2,00,000 had been sanctioned and paid.

(*b*) Owing to abnormal conditions in the city the majority of the teachers of schools in Calcutta and many of the teachers of colleges have received little or no salary for several months.

(*c*) (*i*)(1) 84 schools and (2) 14 colleges.

(*ii*) The amounts have been paid to Head Masters and Principals for distribution to teachers who have not been receiving their full salary or will be credited to the Reserve Funds or General College Funds where institutions have paid their teachers full salaries out of such funds or overdrawn their bank accounts to pay salaries. Teachers of schools will be paid Rs.75 each and lecturers and teachers in colleges Rs.150 each.

(*iii*) Approximately 500 college teachers and 1,400 school teachers. No figures to show communal proportions are available.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the sum sanctioned is equal to that of the grant-in-aid due to those institutions?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: No.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Is it less or more?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: According to the distress in individual cases.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the sum is an additional grant besides the grant-in-aid?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: Yes

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if any scheme was drawn up before the amounts were sanctioned for the institutions?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: Yes. There were several Conferences between the University and the Government and a Special Officer (Dr. W. A. Jenkins) was appointed to frame a scheme. After fully scrutinising and carefully examining that scheme, a lump sum of Rs. 2,00,000 was sanctioned.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: What was the basis on which the lump sum amount mentioned by the Hon'ble Minister was sanctioned?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: The basis was half-average pay for a professor or teacher as the case may be.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Was there any condition attached as to the period for which the students would be exempted from payment of their dues as fees?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: No.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Then, am I to take it that these institutions to whom these amounts were given were exacting fees from students even when they were not attending their classes?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: What is your question, Khan Bahadur? Perhaps the question you have just put does not arise.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: I think, Sir, it does arise in this way: Where extra amounts were sanctioned, were the institutions asked by Government to exempt the absentee students from payment of their dues?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: There was no such condition attached: this payment was made to make up for the loss sustained by the institutions.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if these amounts were allotted without any examination of the condition of the finances of the institutions or they were given on a lump sum average pay basis?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: Their accounts were examined by the Special Officer before the grants were made.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the money that had been given would be refunded to Government after the realisation of fees from students?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: No; there is no such condition.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Then, will the institutions concerned be allowed to receive grants from Government and also realise fees from students and make profit?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: It was impossible for them to realise back fees from students and to pay the teachers' salaries. Therefore Government came to the rescue of the unfortunate teachers on the principle of half-average pay to be paid to each of them.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, my question has not been properly answered. I wanted to know——

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: What is your specific question?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: My question is this: What is the source of the Hon'ble Minister's information when he says that there is no means by which arrear dues from students could not be collected?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: That was in the report of the Special Officer. It was found as a matter of fact that all arrear dues had to be written off.

Mr. P. BANERJI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether these amounts were paid to the teachers and not to the institutions?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: The grants were made to the heads of institutions with the direction that these amounts should be paid to the professors and teachers of those institutions.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any money has been sanctioned for Chittagong institutions?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: I can tell the honourable member that as a matter of fact I am going to receive a deputation from college professors and school teachers of Chittagong as also of other war-affected areas like the Calcutta professors' and teachers' deputation I had previously received.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if Government had made any arrangements to supervise the payment of these amounts to teachers or to see that the amounts did actually reach the teachers concerned?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: Yes. The Special Officer insisted upon producing a receipt of actual payment to the teachers from the heads of institutions concerned.

Forfeiture of stipends by students of the Feni College.

*2. **Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to state whether any students of the Feni College have been deprived of their stipends?

(*b*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason thereof?

(*c*) Do the Government contemplate the withdrawal of the order?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: The scholarship and stipend holders who participated in the strike and were absent from the college, subsequently applied through the Principal for condonation of the absence and they were granted leave without scholarships or stipends for the period of one month from 29th January to 28th February, 1942, as a special case and allowed to draw their scholarships or stipends for the

remaining period with the warning that similar conduct in future would be visited with all the penalties laid down in the rules for scholarships and stipends.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what was the occasion in connection with which there was a strike?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: This question does not arise.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Sir, the Hon'ble Minister says in his reply: "the scholarship and stipend-holders who participated in the strike, etc." May we know what was the reason for the strike and what was the strike for?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: Because the Principal took disciplinary action against the boys and as a protest the boys of of the college and the hostel left without any notice.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what were the reasons for the Principal to take action—disciplinary action to which he has just referred—against the students?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: Because they misbehaved themselves on the occasion of the Ministers' visit to Feni.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is the policy of Government to penalise all the stipend-holders for the offence of one or two who had been absent from the college and also if it is their intention that the stipend-holders must attend classes in spite of the fact that the whole college is on strike?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: No, Sir.

Mr. M. A. H. ISPAHANI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what he actually means by "misbehaviour"?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: I mean indecent conduct in open street.

Mr. M. A. H. ISPAHANI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what he actually meant by "indecent conduct in the open street"? Will he clarify?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: I need not say more than what the Principal reported that they misbehaved in the street.

Mr. M. A. H. ISPAHANI: I am afraid the answer is not what I want to know. I want to know what he understands by "indecent conduct in the open street".

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is a matter of opinion.

Maulvi ABUL HASHIM: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is the policy of Government that stipend-holders should get stipends or scholarships on condition that they must remain subservient to the Ministers?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: No.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state at whose instance—whether at the instance of the Hon'ble Minister—the punishment was inflicted on the students?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: The disciplinary action was taken by the Principal himself on his own initiative.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: Not at the instance of the Minister?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: No.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to look into his file and enlighten the House if it is not a fact that the students were confined to the hostel when the Minister arrived there and the guns of the armed police were trained at the windows of the hostel to prevent students from making any demonstration?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: It is absolutely untrue.

Term of official President of Mymensingh District School Board.

***3. Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the official President, District School Board, Mymensingh, continued to act as President of the said Board on the expiration of the statutory period?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the reasons thereof; and

(*ii*) the steps Government propose to take to legalise the works done by the official President, after the expiry of the statutory period of eight years?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) (*i*) He was apparently under a misapprehension.

(*ii*) No steps are considered necessary.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: With reference to answer (*a*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what was the period during which the District Magistrate under a misapprehension was in charge of the School Board though legally he was not entitled to it?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: My information is that it was for a very short period, but I am unable to give the exact time.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: I want to know the exact period—was it a month or more or less than a month?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: Beyond that I cannot say anything now. If you want to know the exact number of days I want notice.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the District Magistrate, when he remained in charge of the District School Board—though he was not legally entitled to it—did any act during that period?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: He must have done some acts—I am not aware.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the acts that were done by the District Magistrate as President were not *ultra vires* and illegal?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: Not at all. My answer under (*b*) (*a*) will make that clear. He did nothing which requires invalidation or he did not do anything which will be necessary to rectify to meet any audit objection.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he consulted the Legal Remembrancer or the Advocate-General so far as the question of validation of the acts of the District Magistrate as President of the District School Board after the expiry of the statutory period of 8 years is concerned?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: No, as I am a lawyer myself, I need not take any opinion.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Sir, my question has not been answered. Whether he is a lawyer or not is not my question. My point is whether he sought the opinion of the Legal Remembrancer or that of the Advocate-General?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: I need not.

Appointment of Sub-Registrars.

*4. **Khan Bahadur ABIDUR RAZA CHOWDHURY:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education (Registration) Department aware that by notification No. 847Rgn., and No. 848Rgn., dated the 21st August, 1942, published in the *Calcutta Gazette*, dated the 27th August, 1942, 8 probationary Sub-Registrars and 4 temporary Sub-Registrars have been appointed respectively?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether any notification was made for these 12 appointments; if so, when; and

(*ii*) whether any nomination was called for from the Divisional Commissioners for these 12 appointments?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) (*ii*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons therefor?

(*d*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any of these 12 Sub-Registrars is his relative?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) (*i*) On the 4th December, 1941, in respect of three of the appointments only.

(*ii*) No.

(*c*) Of these twelve appointments, three had been allotted to Inspector-General of Registration's nominations and nine to direct appointment by Government. Notifications were issued in respect of the former allotment, but Government do not usually issue notifications in respect of direct appointments. The appointments (ten in number) allotted to nominations by Divisional Commissioners were made separately after notification.

(*d*) One of them is my nephew.

Mr. M. A. H. ISPAHANI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether patronage to the nephew extends beyond the department of the Chief Minister?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That question does not arise.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that he has appointed his son also as a Sub-Registrar?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: That question does not arise out of this question. You may put another question if you so like.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: My question is whether the Hon'ble Minister has appointed his son as a Sub-Registrar.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: If there is a question on that point, I will answer it at the proper time.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: Sir, if necessary, let the Hon'ble Minister say that he wants notice.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: A question has been put and the Hon'ble Minister can either refuse to answer it or answer it.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: Yes, my son also is a Sub-Registrar.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what are the qualifications of his nephew and also of his son?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: My nephew is a graduate and my son has read up to the I. A. Standard, and I have given him a direct appointment.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the minimum qualification for the post of Sub-Registrar is I.A.?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: No. Government has the discretion to relax the rules in any case. I can appoint even a non-Matric.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether there were a sufficient number of graduates as candidates for this post?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: His case was taken out of the ordinary category and given special consideration on the ground of the services of his family for about 150 years under the British rule.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether his son got nomination direct from the Ministry or through the proper channel?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: He got it from the Secretary of the Education Department. The selection was made with other candidates and he was found to be one of the most desirable candidates.

Mr. SHAHEDALI: In view of the innumerable number of graduates, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether his nephew has got any claim for this special consideration?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: Most certainly. The services of his family are coeval with the reigns of seven English kings.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state in how many cases the sons and nephews of the Hon'ble Minister or Ministers or ex-Ministers have been favoured with similar concessions?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: I know of sons and nephews of M.L.As., but I do not know of sons and nephews of any other Minister.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is it a fact that concession has been made only in the case of the son and the nephew of the present Hon'ble Minister?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: No, I have made concession in other cases also. Similar concessions—though not of such a high value—have been made in the cases of sons and nephews of other people also.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I have put a specific question. I am not rambling about the sons and nephews of other people. I want to know whether there is any other Hon'ble Minister involved whose son or nephew or a near relation has been similarly given such special concession and Government rule has been waived for finding a suitable appointment for him.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: May have been made in the past for aught I know.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: What are those cases?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: That I cannot tell you.

Maulana MD. ABDUL AZIZ: মাননীয় মন্ত্রীমহাশয় দয়া করিয়া বলবেন কি যে যে করজন Sub-Registrar নেওয়া হইয়াছে তাহার মধ্যে কোন Final Madrassah পাশ মৌলবী আছে কিনা ?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: হাঁ আমার আমলেই প্রথম নেওয়া হইয়াছে। Yes, I have made appointments in my time.

Maulana MD. ABDUL AZIZ: তাহার সংখ্যা কয়জন ?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM : তাহার সংখ্যা একজন One. That is a good beginning.

Appointment of Sub-Registrars.

*5. **Maulvi RAJIBUDDIN TARAFDAR:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education (Registration) Department be pleased to lay on the table a statement showing—

(*i*) the number of Sub-Registrars that have been appointed from January, 1942, to 31st August, 1942.

(*ii*) the number of them that are—

(1) Hindus,
(2) Muslims, and
(3) Scheduled Castes; and

(*iii*) whether any of them is related to any of the Ministers?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: (*a*) (*i*) 22.

(*ii*) (1) Hindus 8.
(2) Muslims 11.
(3) Scheduled Castes 3.

(*iii*) One of them is my nephew.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he has relaxed the educational qualifications in the case of his son?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: The question of nephew is here.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: Then, Sir, I shall have to repeat the same supplementary question here also. Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if one of the Sub-Registrars appointed was one of his sons?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: Yes.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This has already been answered. You put it in another form.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: The Hon'ble Minister has already replied "yes". Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he has not relaxed the educational qualifications, I mean the minimum educational qualifications required, in the case of his son?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: I have already answered that.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: May I appeal to the honourable members not to put any further questions on the subject, because the whole thing is so scandalous that it is unnecessary to put any supplementary question.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order.

Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: With reference to answer (*a*) (*iii*), viz., "one of them is my nephew," may I ask the Hon'ble Minister to explain what was the reason for not disclosing this fact before? May I ask the reason why the information that not only his nephew but also his son was appointed was suppressed?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahaur M. ABDUL KARIM: The answer was given with reference to a particular notification of a particular date mentioned in question No. 4. This appointment was made subsequently.

Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I am sorry I have to press this point, because the answer is not very satisfactory. The question is, "(*i*) the number of Sub-Registrars that have been apopinted from January, 1942, to 31st August, 1942." During this period——

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: That appointment was made long after that.

Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: When?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: That appointment was made in December.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if his son is a Third Division Matriculate?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: No.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to the services rendered by the nephew's family to seven British kings, may we know the names of those kings?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That question does not arise.

Classification of Defence of India Rules prisoner Sunil Ghosh.

*6. **Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether Sunil Ghosh, B.SC., convicted by the Subdivisional Officer, Khulna, under the Defence of India Rules in September last was recommended by the Magistrate as a division II prisoner?

(*b*) Is it a fact that he has been placed as division III prisoner?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason therefor?

(*d*) Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that his father was a Deputy Superintendent of Police?

(*e*) Have the Government received any petition from the convict for reclassification?

MINISTER in charge of the HOME DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq): (*a*) He was convicted in December last and recommended by the Magistrate for classification in division II.

(*b*) No. He was placed in division II.

(*c*) Does not arise.

(*d*) My information is that his father was an Inspector of Police.

(*e*) No.

Protection of security prisoners of Presidency Jail against air raids.

*7. **Mr. SIBNATH BANERJEE:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Jails) Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the present number of—

(1) security prisoners, and

(2) convicted prisoners in the Presidency Jail;

(*ii*) whether he has received any petition from any prisoners of the said jail for their protection against air raids; and

(*iii*) what measures, if any, have been taken for the protection of the prisoners inside the jail in case of a raid?

(*b*) Is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of releasing the prisoners who are reported to be of good behaviour or of transferring them to some safer places?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) (*i*) Figures on the 16th September, 1942, were as follows:—

(1) Security prisoners 44. Criminal security prisoners 837.

(2) 690.

(*ii*) Yes.

(*iii*) Provision of First Aid boxes and construction of baffle walls. Arrangements for quick opening of wards if necessary and various other precautions as approved by A.R.P. Training Officer.

(*b*) Recommendations of the Tribunal for security prisoners for release of some of them are under consideration. In proper cases the convicted prisoners who are reported to be of good behaviour are released on the recommendation of the Advisory Board. Transfer of these prisoners from the Presidency Jail to any safer place is not possible for want of suitable accommodation.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answer (*a*) (*ii*), in reply to the question whether he has received any petition from the prisoners and the answer in the affirmative, may I know what is the date of receipt of that petition and what action has so far been taken thereon?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I will take this as a notice and answer this question at the earliest possible opportunity.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answer (*a*) (*iii*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state who is the authority who will decide the necessity, as mentioned, of opening the wards when there is an air raid alarm?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Obviously the Superintendent of the Jail acting possibly on information received from the wardens. I say this from what I consider——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I find some difficulty here. "Arrangements for quick opening of wards if necessary and various other precautions," etc., are mentioned. Now, Sir, it is the experience of all of us that when air raid alarms go quick immediate decision has to be taken, and I would like to know if the Hon'ble Minister has been advised as to how this provision is going to be given effect to.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I confess I cannot reply to this question, but if my honourable friend will let me have his suggestion, I will most gladly consider it.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is it a fact that during the last few air raid alarms persons who were detained in the first floor of the jail had to remain in the first floor and they were not allowed to come down even to the ground floor?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I have no information whatever. I may make an enquiry.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Will the Hon'ble and learned Chief Minister give us the exact date when he received the recommendations as mentioned in part (*b*) and how long does he propose to take for the consideration of those recommendations?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I may mention for the information of my most learned and venerable friend that these things require some time. Persons possessed of quick intelligence can dispose of them promptly. I do not claim any special qualifications. Surrounded as we are by various

considerations which demand our prompt attention, we have to proceed slowly and take into account also various other circumstances. But we shall try to minimise my honourable friend's suspense as much as possible.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: My question has not been answered. I wanted categorically the date on which he received the recommendations of the Tribunal——

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: It is impossible for me to give any date. I cannot remember.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: The Hon'ble Minister says that it is impossible for him to give any date. Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi does not want to probe into the future. He wants to have information about what happened in the past. He wants to know when the recommendations of the Tribunal were received.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You need not speak for Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi. If you have any questions to ask, you may ask.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the recommendations referred to were received before the death of the late Mr. Justice Panckridge which occurred probably four months ago?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I did not receive the recommendations before his death. I received them officially some time later, about three weeks after his death. I can tell the House that but for the present abnormal conditions effect would have been given forthwith. But we have got to take into consideration various matters which have arisen after the report of the Tribunal was received.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what are those various considerations that are standing in the way? Is it the obstructiveness of some of the permanent officials?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The circumstances are very briefly these. Immediately after the report of the Tribunal was received and we were giving our consideration to their recommendations, the Congress movement began and there was such an amount of lawlessness in the country that it was not considered safe to give effect to those recommendations at that time. It is not the permanent officials who stand in the way. But these matters appertain to the domain of responsibility of the Governor. As a matter of fact, we cannot claim to have a free hand in things of this kind. Various considerations have got to be taken into account and we have to proceed slowly.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Council of Ministers have considered the report and recommended the taking of action thereon?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am sorry I am not prepared to answer that question.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the date refers to the date earlier than the starting of the movement following the arrest of Congreess leaders—that would be 6 months before? Sir, let me make myself clear. The Hon'ble Minister mentioned a date immediately after or some time after the report was received when the movement was started and therefore certain complications arose. Evidently the report was received before that——

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I did not give any date. It was almost synchronous. The receiving of the report and the starting of the movement were not separated by any long period of time.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state, with reference to answer (*a*) (*iii*) regarding provision of First Aid boxes and construction of baffle walls, etc., whether the prisoners were taken into confidence by the jail authorities and whether the prisoners have been apprised as to what they should do and what arrangements have been made in case of an air raid?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, I do not know whether any specific instructions have been given, but I understand that it has been widely advertised, and the first precaution that people should take is that they should go into some shelter. If there are any upper storeys, *i.e.*, first floor or second floor, they should go down to the ground floor and take cover as quickly as possible. That is the first precautionary step to be taken, and I believe that the prisoners know that and they want to follow that. If they are debarred in their attempt to do so, the matter will certainly require investigation.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to the Advisory Board mentioned for examining the cases of convicted prisoners, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state which Advisory Board he is referring to? There was an Advisory Board composed of certain members of the Legislature and also certain officials. Our information was that that Advisory Board had become *functus officio*. There is another Advisory Board for looking into the cases of convicted prisoners excepting political prisoners, and it is not allowed to go into the political prisoners' cases at all. So I would like to know which Advisory Board the Hon'ble Minister has in mind in this answer.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am not in a position to give the information, but it is an important point, and I will find out what exactly the Advisory Board is on whose recommendations we are taking action. I may mention, Sir, that so far as the release of these prisoners is concerned we have already taken action and a large number of security prisoners have already been released.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to the question of non-availability of suitable accommodation for prisoners, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if Government is considering the desirability

of repairing the second half of the old lunatic asylum at Berhampore, one-half of which is being used as a special jail to enable security prisoners to be transferred there at an early date?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am not aware of that. There are various alternative proposals before the Government in order to find accommodation where all security prisoners could be safely lodged. As regards the Berhampore Jail, I am not aware but I cannot possibly say "no".

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is it the fact that the Hon'ble Chief Minister himself has seen the Berhampore Jail and that the other half is under repair and the repairs are being proceeded with with a view to accommodate prisoners, security or otherwise? Will the Hon'ble Minister kindly let me know whether the Government is considering the desirability of quickly completing the repairs to make it suitable for housing the security prisoners there?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I now remember that. I had been to Berhampore Jail, and I know the construction that is being done to which the honourable member has drawn my attention. As regards the transfer of prisoners, I shall certainly look into the matter.

Police-firing in Danipur Rice Mill in Tamluk subdivision, Midnapore.

*8. **Mr. ADWAITA KUMAR MAJI:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department aware that a police-firing took place on the 8th September last at Danipur Rice Mill compound in Tamluk subdivision in the district of Midnapore?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the reason thereof,

(*ii*) the number of persons killed and injured amongst the public and the police,

(*iii*) the nature of injury sustained by each, and

(*iv*) the manner in which the dead bodies were disposed of?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the villagers were persuading the mill-owner not to transfer or export rice from the locality in a very peaceful and non-violent way?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) (*i*) A crowd numbering 2,000—3,000 was incited by agitators to loot the paddy in the rice mill at Danipur and to assault the police force of one head constable and 4 constables who had been deputed to guard the mill.

(*ii*) and (*iii*) Three men were killed and probably some were injured, but I cannot say what the number was as no injured person was left after the dispersal of the mob. One constable received a *lathi* blow and three others received injuries from brickbats.

(*iv*) They were cremated.

(*c*) This is not a fact.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: With reference to question (*b*) (*i*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is aware that the alleged crowd numbering 2,000 to 3,000 was not there exactly for the purpose of looting the paddy but was there impelled by hunger to demand that paddy?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: In that case hunger, I should say, was the cause for the loot.

Dr. GOBINDA CHANDRA BHOWMIK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state, with reference to answer (*b*) (*i*), as to who were the agitators?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I have simply said, "agitators," and I have not referred to any political group. They may be political agitators, they may be non-political agitators, or they may be persons who were of opinion that an action like this would be of advantage to the people. I think they were ill-advised and beyond that I have nothing more to say.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether necessary warning was given before firing was resorted to?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I understand that all the legal precautions must have been taken before firing was resorted to.

Dr. GOBINDA CHANDRA BHOWMIK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the persons killed were without food for two or three days?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I cannot answer that question offhand. I do not know.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: What was the status of the officer who ordered the firing?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I cannot say offhand, and I want notice.

Dr. GOBINDA CHANDRA BHOWMIK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the dead bodies of the killed persons were refused to be made over to their respective relatives, and, if so, by whom were they cremated?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I do not know, but if my friend wants this information as to the persons by whom these dead bodies were cremated, I will furnish him with the same later on.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: On a point of order, Sir. Would you consider it right on the part of an Hon'ble Minister to say, "I do not

know." A question is asked by a member, and I think it is the duty of a Minister to find out how things come out: he cannot tell us, "I do not know."

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: All that I have to see is whether a question has been put in a proper form and also whether a proper answer has been given. If the Minister says, "I do not know," I cannot help you: if the Minister chooses not to answer in the public interest, even then I cannot help you. My business is only to see whether proper answers are given to questions put.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The expression "I do not know" refers to the present time. At the present moment I do not know, but if the information is wanted, I will find it out.

Failure of crops in Thakurgaon in Dinajpur.

*9. **Mr. HAFIZUDDIN CHOUDHURI:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department aware—

(*i*) that there has been continuous drought from May up to date in some parts of Dinajpur district, particularly in the Thakurgaon subdivision;

(*ii*) that *aman* paddy could not be planted in more than half of the area of Thakurgaon subdivision, and

(*iii*) that *aus* crop has totally failed in most parts of the subdivision?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government contemplate to advance agricultural loan to the cultivators?

MINISTER in charge of the REVENUE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee): (*a*) (*i*) There have been insufficient rains throughout the Thakurgaon subdivision.

(*ii*) The area in which *aman* paddy could not be planted is 6 to 8 annas of the normal area under *aman* paddy.

(*iii*) There was partial failure in some parts.

(*b*) Rs.1,25,000 has been sanctioned during the current year for distribution as agricultural loan in Dinajpur district.

Babu PREMHARI BARMA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if any direction has been given to the district authorities of Dinajpur for distributing agricultural loan in the affected parts of Thakurgaon subdivision from the amount that has been sanctioned for the district of Dinajpur?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I do not think so, but if the honourable member will be good enough to see me with any specific case of default, I shall take necessary action.

Mr. A. M. ABDUL HAMID: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether there have been sufficient rains in other parts of the Dinajpur district?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: So far as my information goes, there have been insufficient rains throughout the Thakurgaon subdivision; there may have been insufficient rains elsewhere.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if there is any necessity for gratuitous relief in the Thakurgaon subdivision?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: No representation has reached the Revenue Department through the local officials. If any such representation reaches the department concerned, then it will be the duty of Government to consider such representation.

Relief measures in Faridpur.

***10. Maulvi AHMADALI MRIDHA:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing, year by year, since 1938-39 to 1941-42 the amount spent as—

(*a*) test relief,
(*b*) gratuitous relief, and
(*c*) agricultural loan,

in the district of Faridpur, subdivision by subdivision?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: A statement is laid on the Table.

Statement referred to in reply to starred question No. 10.

	Sadar subdivision.	Goalundo subdivision.	Madaripur subdivision.	Gopalganj subdivision.	Total.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Test relief—					
1938-39 ..	8,200	7,500	7,200	8,100	31,000
1939-40 ..	10,479	12,029	12,637	9,500	44,645
1940-41 ..	2,849	577	2,000	..	5,426
1941-42* ..	41,539	41,657	31,196	12,816	1,27,208
Gratuitous relief—					
1938-39 ..	5,250	9,000	3,000	12,750	30,000
1939-40 ..	403	512	917	2,881	4,713
1940-41 ..	..	..	100	..	100
1941-42 ..	2,200	123	7,400	3,877	13,600
Agricultural loan—					
1938-39 ..	1,28,000	2,50,000	1,12,000	1,70,000	6,60,000
1939-40 ..	28,100	40,000	32,808	30,920	1,31,828
1940-41 ..	35,000	20,000	..	..	55,000
1941-42 ..	1,27,515	1,22,094	49,136	1,78,000	4,76,745

*The figures are *approximate* and exclusive of the expenditure incurred for establishment and other contingent charges which are not available now. Accurate figures could not be obtained from the District Board through whom the expenditure on account of test relief work was made in 1941-42.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that this year there has been complete failure of crop in the Goalundo subdivision of the Faridpur district and the distress there has been more acute than ever?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I am afraid, this question does not arise. But if there is any difficulty anywhere, I will be prepared to give the honourable member information if he comes and sees me in my chamber.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to refer to the answer to unstarred question No. 1 of today and state if it is not a fact that the deterioration of the river is responsible to a very great extent to the distress that has occurred during the last five years and is still continuing?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You are giving information and not asking for it.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Is not the present condition of the river responsible for acute distress in Goalundo subdivision?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I do not deal with the Irrigation Department, but I am grateful for the information given by the honourable member.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: In view of the answer just given, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he feels that a co-ordinated action between the different departments—between the Irrigation Department and his own department—is necessary just to save the people from rack and ruin?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: This question does not arise out of question No. 10, but such co-ordination would be certainly useful.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(answers to which were laid on the table)

Re-excavation of Chandana river of Goalundo Subdivision.

1. Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Communications and Works (Irrigation) Department aware—

(*i*) that the river Chandana deteriorated long ago;

(*ii*) that the subdivisions of Goalundo and Faridpur in the district of Faridpur deteriorated in respect of health, agriculture and communications;

(*iii*) that the situation was brought to the notice of the Government in the decade before last; and

(*iv*) that surveys were undertaken in different times and schemes were formulated?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*iv*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the nature of the scheme formulated; and

(*ii*) when it was done?

(*c*) Is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of working out the scheme? If so, when?

MINISTER in charge of the COMMUNICATIONS and WORKS DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. M. Shamsuddin Ahmed): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) and (*c*) The river Chandana is connected with several other rivers and *khals* in the locality which together form what may be called the Chandana system. This system demands treatment as a whole and so no permanent benefit can be expected from the improvement of a single river. The scheme which was prepared in 1928 for the improvement of the Chandana river only was not, therefore, taken up. A survey of the Chandana system has recently been completed, but the data thus collected are not considered sufficient to determine and locate the spill openings required in the road and railway embankments for a permanent improvement of the river. The only way to determine them is to make a model and test it in a hydraulic laboratory the establishment of which Government are anxious to expedite as much as practicable.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Does the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Irrigation Department also consider if co-ordinated action is necessary in this matter?

The Hon'ble Mr. M. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: This matter is under the consideration of Government.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: When was the survey of the Chandana river completed?

The Hon'ble Mr. M. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: It was completed some time ago. I may say in this connection that the whole irrigation system is being investigated at the present time and for that purpose a laboratory has been established to go into the whole question of water channels in the province. The whole question is being investigated into and a decision will be taken on the whole question after a thorough investigation.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question hour is now over.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: In that case will you kindly postpone this and the remaining questions till next day as the question hour is now over?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes.

[Supplementaries to Unstarred Question No. 1 and the remaining questions were held over.]

Adjournment Motion.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Sir, may I know the fate of the adjournment motion of which I gave notice?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I gave notice of an adjournment motion. I beg leave of the House to move the adjournment motion.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have received more than a dozen adjournment motions. I have examined all these. I have given my consent with regard to Dr. Sanyal's motion. I would like to know from Dr. Sanyal whether he is prepared to take the responsibility of his motion.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Certainly.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I want to know how you can mix all these questions together. You know you are to deal with one subject in an adjournment motion, but you have raised several subjects.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: No, Sir, I am dealing with one subject, namely, repression, and to be more specific, the nature of repression is described——

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You can very well discuss these matters by cut motions.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: No, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will ascertain the Government viewpoint.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, it is for you to decide whether the various matters to which reference has been made should be separately discussed or in one comprehensive adjournment motion. So far as I am concerned I do not wish to stifle discussion; on the contrary, I will like to have a discussion on these points so that Government may get an opportunity of stating their case also.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I take it that Government have no objection. I will now ascertain the wish of the House.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: That is not necessary. If no objection is made——

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You have only got Government's viewpoint. I will now ascertain whether you have got the leave of the House.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, the rule says if no objection is taken, the Speaker shall intimate the hour at which the motion will be taken up. The rule is there.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, you have got to get the leave of the House.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: May I rise on a point of order? Sir, you were pleased to tell us about five minutes ago that Dr. Sanyal had

jumbled up certain points and you wanted satisfaction on those. Even if the Government accepts the motion, I should like to know whether under the rules you consider this motion to be properly worded and to be correct.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I have got your consent, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have already given my consent; therefore your question does not arise. Now I want to ascertain whether any member of the House objects to this motion being moved by Dr. Sanyal. I will read the motion:

"This Assembly do now adjourn to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance and of recent occurrence, namely, the repressions carried out in the Contai and Tamluk subdivisions of Midnapore district including the arrest of innocent persons, destruction of property, burning of houses and assaults on men and women."

Is there any objection to this motion being moved by Dr. Sanyal?

(There was no objection.)

I will fix Monday for this motion to be moved just after the question period. I cannot give a definite time, because I will have to consult the Leader of the House as to when they will meet on Monday next. Therefore, it will be better for me to allow Dr. Sanyal to move this motion just after the question hour on Monday because it has been decided, I now understand, that there will be no sitting of the House tomorrow—Saturday.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, Mr. Siddiqi has remarked that Government has accepted the motion. Government has not. We have no objection to the matter being discussed, because I will get an opportunity of stating our point of view.

Mr. K. SHAHABUDDIN: Sir, a number of members from this side of the House gave notices of motions for adjournment——

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: As regards the other adjournment motions, I have given my consent to one motion of Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy, that is, with regard to the removal of Chairmen of Bengal District Boards, and I waive the urgency as I cannot take up more than one motion in a single day. If Mr. Suhrawardy takes the opportunity of raising this question on Monday next, I will fix a day for its discussion. With regard to the rest, I have considered them and in my opinion these do not satisfy the rules and I have disallowed them.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: All other motions?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: With regard to the motion on food policy? We are on the verge of starvation.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am prepared to accept the motion if it is happily worded and if it complies with the rules.

I have already given my consent to Dr. Mookerjee to make a statement, but now there will be a recess for prayer. The House stands adjourned for 15 minutes.

(After adjournment.)

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move——

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Roy, my difficulty with regard to adjournment motions is this: There will be a statement by a Minister who has resigned, and I will have to take that up first after the question hour and before other business in the agenda. I have already given consent to Dr. Mookerjee to make a statement. So I cannot take up your motion now. I will take it up after the statement is over.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Certainly, Sir. But what about our adjournment motions?

Mr. K. SHAHABUDDIN: May I explain about the adjournment motions given notice of by our party. May I remind you, Sir, that in the past when Mr. Speaker found the wording of any motion not proper, he suggested amendments and after such amendments were made that motion was considered.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will consider that. With regard to a particular motion I have already said that I have given my consent, but certain modifications are required. I will do so after consultation and with regard to the others I will also consider them if they are in conformity with the rules.

Statement by Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee on his resignation as Finance Minister.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I with your permission make a statement on the opening day of the Legislative Assembly dealing with the circumstances which led to my resignation as a Minister. It is all the more necessary that I should do so since my resignation has not been due to any want of confidence in me either by the House or the party to which I have the honour to belong. In fact, it has not been due to any difference of opinion either with the Chief Minister or any of my colleagues on any question of public importance. As members of the House are aware, I felt compelled to resign first because I found that the continued policy of the British Government and the Government in this country was to ignore the claims of Indians to fuller political power, to hamper good government consistent with the true interests of the people and to weaken the forces of people's defence against enemy aggression. It is not my intention to reiterate the points which I had mentioned in my letter of resignation to the Governor dealing with the all-India political situation. That letter, along with several other documents, runs to the

Hitlerian traditions of the Government of this province, today form part of proscribed literature. A Minister's accusation of autocratic misrule need not be replied to with facts and figures but must be suppressed under arbitrary rules—what grander conception could the British authorities hold before us of responsible Government in India?

Suffice it to say that I definitely regard the authorities as responsible for the present deadlock in India. The Indian public on the whole can possibly have no sympathy with any foreign aggressor. The reason is simple and straightforward. We do not want a change of masters. We would like to see our country attain as speedily as possible that political status which is its birthright. There is no sense in our asking to be rid of British control, if we simultaneously wish to place ourselves under a fresh foreign yoke. The deadlock however suits the reactionary elements that dominate over the Indian administration and it is manifest that the British Government has no desire to part with power in India. Excuse after excuse is trotted out for holding India under its heels against the will of her people. Whatever British protagonists may say, Government stands unmasked as regards its attitude towards India. Indeed, in this respect, we see no difference between its greed and the greed of the Axis Powers to control and dominate over weaker territories for their own selfish ends. The reign of repression that we have witnessed in India since August last has been directed not only against a so-called subversive movement but against every form of nationalist activities, calculated to mobilise the will-power of Indians to throw off a foreign rule that they intensely dislike. As our British friends from a high moral altitude sometimes rebuke Hitler, so let us remind our masters that the history of all oppressed countries has for ever shown that the greater the repression by the oppressor, the more intense is the urge of the oppressed to unite and struggle for their rights. Sufferings of unarmed people at the hands of armed oppressors only elevate the former and bring the latter into contempt before the bar of world opinion. They may for a time over-awe the sufferers. But hatred and bitterness deepen and reaction comes sooner than the upholders of the rule of "might is right" very often imagine, which completely uproots the loose and shaky foundation on which their Government rests.

It was not however merely on this all-India policy and its repercussions in Bengal that I felt compelled to resign, but there were other circumstances which rendered it impossible for me to continue in office, consistent with my self-respect. For the first time in the history of the province representatives of large sections of Hindus, Muslims and other communities combined to work the provincial constitution. I do not ignore that the Opposition today represents a considerable section of Muslim opinion in Bengal and to me personally nothing would be of greater satisfaction than to see a combination of all the Indian elements in the Legislature on the basis of a common programme to fight for the rights of the people in this critical period of the history of Bengal. In any case, even the combination that we had formed under the leadership of Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq proved something too bitter to be swallowed by a section of permanent officials in

this province and by no less a person than the head of the provincial administration himself. British rule thrives in the eyes of the outer world on constant strifes between Hindus and Muslims. And even a partial unity on the part of members belonging to these two great communities served as a nightmare to those bureaucrats who held in their hands the real powers of administration.

Let me at this stage briefly refer to the fundamental features of the constitution that governs the administration of an Indian province. Indian Ministers are trotted out as Mr. Amery's show-boys when foreign public opinion is to be soothed as regards the grand appearance of provincial autonomy in India. The world is reminded that the destinies of millions of Indians are in the hands of Indian Ministers responsible to the Legislature. The true fact however is that while Ministers have large responsibilities and have to justify the conduct and administrative acts of themselves and of irresponsible bureaucrats before the Legislature and the public, they have very little of real power which lies vested in the autocratic hands of the Governor of the province concerned. And the Governor has at his beck and call the services of a small coterie of unsympathetic and unimaginative civil servants, utterly oblivious of the real interests of the people of the province. Apart from important sections of the Government of India Act which entitle the Governor to act in his discretion or in the exercise of his individual judgment, section 52 clothes him with special responsibilities which can be utilised by a reactionary Governor, acting in close association with his chosen officers in a manner highly detrimental to the interests of the people. And if I may pause here for a moment and ask what guarantee is there that an Indian province will get a Governor who has the capacity, the integrity and the willingness to act as a constitutional head, ever ready to establish healthy conventions broadening the base of the constitution, and not as an arbitrary dictator or as an interfering busybody, the answer is that the guarantee is nil. If I ask again what protection the people of an Indian province have to save themselves from the clutches of a Governor and his happy family of selected civil servants, the answer is that the protection is nil. It is common knowledge that a Governor of an Indian province is selected not always on the ground of merit or breadth of outlook but very often for personal considerations and political patronage. Thus a man who by reason of his administrative and personal qualities may not even be competent to become a head clerk in Clive Street or who by reason of his capacity for carrying on intrigues and setting one against the other may at best adorn a modest chair in Elysium Row finds himself raised to the giddy height of Governorship of an Indian province. Shielded as he is from public criticisms, forgetful of his own obvious limitations, he is encouraged to do acts behind the scene which render him positively dangerous to the peace and tranquillity of the province under his charge. (A voice: Recall him.)

During my experience as a Minister I found to my utter surprise that in many vital matters affecting the rights and liberty of the people, the advice

tendered by Ministers was invariably subject to revision in the light of the counsel tendered by the more trusted members of the services whose omni-competence was almost of a divine character——

Mr. A. F. STARK: On a point of order, Sir. I am very sorry to interrupt Dr. Mookerjee. That is the last thing we would like to do. But I should like to draw your attention to rule 12 of the Assembly Procedure Rules which says that no member while speaking may reflect upon the conduct of any Governor. I would suggest, Sir, that Dr. Mookerjee is infringing that rule.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Up till now in whatever I have said I have not referred to the present Governor of Bengal and if Mr. Stark says that the cap fits on the head of the present Governor, it is he who infringes the rule and not myself.

Mr. A. F. STARK: I would not have raised the point of order if Dr. Mookerjee's remarks were generally about Governors but he has stated that on many points the advice of the Council of Ministers was neglected.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: By whom?

Mr. A. F. STARK: By the head of the administration.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: I have not yet said so.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: It is no reflection if that be a fact.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Rule 12 (*2*) (*i*) says: "A member while speaking may not reflect upon His Majesty the King." Probably the King cannot be brought into the discussions at all, but with regard to the Governor a distinction is made, viz., "A member while speaking may not reflect upon the conduct of the Governor," that is to say, a specific act which the Governor has done may not be brought up as a matter of discussion.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: What is your point of order, Dr. Sanyal?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I am replying to Mr. Stark's interpretation, rather misinterpretation, of rule 12. I submit that Dr. Mookerjee is entirely within his rights even within the rule.

Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: Sir, may I say something on this point as one who has had some experience of legislative work. In the Central Legislature, when Sir Frederick Whyte was the President, this question cropped up once very seriously and it was debated upon. We were discussing the Indian constitution and its future and a point of order was raised that the conduct of the Governor-General was being questioned. His ruling definitely was that if a subject under discussion is permissible surely that rule must be interpreted liberally; that is to say unless and until an honourable member imputes impure motives to the Governor-General this conduct is not, just because of the rule, beyond the scope of discussion. His

name or the fact that he has done something is not like an obscene word not permissible in polite society. That was the ruling of Sir Frederick Whyte and it still holds in the Central Legislative Assembly.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: For the information of Mr. Stark and for the information of the House I can say this. Contrary to all conventions in the past I asked Dr. Mookerjee to give me an advance copy of the statement. I have read that statement and I have scrutinised it. I am following him even now word for word. In my opinion whatever he has said is necessary for his explanation of his resignation. That is absolutely necessary and in my opinion there is no imputation of any impure motive. As regards the ruling referred to by Mr. Goswami, I have got it before me. Every parliamentarian knows it and knows it very well. My ruling on this point is that I do not find anything wrong in Dr. Mookerjee's statement and I therefore allow Dr. Mookerjee to continue his speech. I hope members will allow him to continue uninterruptedly.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Let me make it clear beyond dispute that I do not charge public servants as a class with having failed to respect the spirit of provincial autonomy in this province. I know of officers, British and Indian, whose services have been of inestimable value to the province. My charge is directed against a coterie of officials forming the Fourth Estate or the Real Estate, who today exercise a malign influence over the affairs of the province, and according to the language of the Defence of India Rules, are dangerous men. I cannot possibly discuss all the details of the provincial adminjstration in respect of which the farcical state of a Government within a Government has been the main characteristic. But matters related not only to the Department of Law and Order but also the other departments. The keynote of the policy of interference was that people of the land were not to be trusted and power, whenever possible, must remain in the hands of chosen British officials (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: And non-officials also) enjoying the confidence of the Governor and his coterie.

In the matter of release of political prisoners the Ministers were anxious to pursue a policy which while fully consistent with the present war emergency would at the same time help to mobilise public opinion of all shades in favour of the defence of the province against Axis aggression. Whether the recommendations affected the general State policy or individual cases, systematic obstruction came from the permanent officials, whom Ministers could not remove, ultimately backed by the support of the head of the provincial administration.

The revised scheme of Home Guards approved by the Council of Ministers, calculated to lay the foundation of a people's army, irrespective of caste, community or politics, was summarily rejected by the Governor inasmuch as the stalwarts of the Department of Law and Order were not prepared to trust Bengalees to unite in the defence of their own motherland or in maintaining internal security. The present situation regarding food and supply of essential commodities has taken an acute turn. But here also the interfering hands of the Governor and the policy of his own selected

officials whom the Ministry was bound to accept, whether it liked them or not, have been mainly responsible for the lack of co-ordination and for the failure to draw up a comprehensive scheme for the relief of the people at large.

When the political disturbances due to the Congress decision in August had not broken out, the policy of combating the movement was outlined by the Government of India and such is the nature of responsible Government functioning in this unfortunate land that that communication was not allowed to be placed before the Council of Ministers in spite of repeated demands made by the Chief Minister himself. (Cries of "Shame, shame".) A coterie of public servants could however see this document and they were ready with plans and proposals. But Ministers were allowed access to it only after the policy had been given effect to by the Government of India on August 9, last. In the matter of appointments, an Indian Civil Servant, who was a Bengali, could easily be superseded by the decision of the Governor in spite of ministerial advice, on the plea that all appointments and transfers were to be made by the Governor acting in his own discretion under the Government of India Act. One may stop here and ask, is that discretion intended to be exercised only in favour of protecting the vested interests of chosen officers or the interest of members belonging to the Governor's own community? Another British Civil Servant (a District Magistrate) had the audacity to put down in writing that the rates of payments made to the unfortunate evacuees of Eastern Bengal were much higher than what they deserved and as "an Imperial officer",—the words are not mine but his—and who will dare say after this that Imperialism will ever die on the soil of India—as an Imperial officer he refused to carry out the orders of the Provincial Government. This officer still remains in power and enjoys a position of great trust and responsibility. Cases of oppression have taken place and there has been a singular obstinacy on the part of the same coterie I have mentioned, to resist any enquiry into such allegations. A Bengali officer enjoying a comparatively subordinate status had the courage to complain about the highhandedness of the military in some area in Eastern Bengal and the wrath of the coterie fell on him and he was ordered a summary transfer. When higher officials oppressed the people and transfer and enquiry were demanded, prestige stood in the way and truth and justice had to be sacrified at its altar. This state of demoralisation and open defiance of elementary canons of discipline are due to the support that the coterie expects to get over the head of the Ministers themselves. Intimate consultation between Government House and the Secretariat behind the back of Ministers was a regular feautre and very often the files themselves bore the evidence of carefully prepared designs for thwarting popular demands.

The history of imposition of collective fines is another chapter of deliberate violation of justice and fairplay. My comments on this matter were distorted in some quarters. The Hindus were singled out for mass punishment in respect of collective fines. I never suggested for a moment that the remedy was the inclusion of Muslims as a whole. My claim has been and is

today that fines should be imposed only on persons who can be held to be guilty according to the provisions of the Ordinance. There should be no imposition based on communal considerations. Just as innocent Muslims should be excluded, so also innocent Hindus should be excluded, unless the policy of Government is to terrorise the Hindus as a community. We as Ministers asked for the whole policy being reconsidered by Cabinet and demanded a correct application of the Ordinance in suitable cases. Would it surprise the Legislative Assembly to know that while the Governor was willing to have the matter considered by Cabinet, he informed the Ministers without any ambiguity that whatever Cabinet might decide, fines already imposed must be collected and the policy already adopted must continue. (Cries of "Shame, shame".) If necessary he was prepared to pass orders under his special responsibility.

The House will recall that in course of a recent discussion the Indian members of the Legislature belonging to all groups pressed Government for liberalising the conditions for admission to the Army and for taking steps for organising a national militia which would be charged with the solemn duty of defending our hearth and home. The Ministry unanimously advocated the creation of such a militia but there was systematic obstruction from higher quarters. Want of arms and ammunitions, want of trainers, want of time were some of the pleas that were put forward time after time. We were reminded that the task of armed defence might be left in the hands of non-Bengalees and we in our turn could well prepare the minds of the people for putting forward an effective passive resistance, should the enemy ever penetrate into our land. The real reason was not a sudden affection for the doctrine of non-violence discovered by British representatives in this province, for England would not rightly agree to follow it in her own case. It was deep-rooted distrust of Bengalees, be they Hindus or Muslims, that justified a deliberate policy of emasculation of the manhood of this land.

The Denial Policy and the schemes for compulsory evacuation for military purposes have caused the greatest possible hardship to thousands of poor people in Bengal. The Council of Ministers prepared a unanimous note indicating with sufficient clearness that the Denial Policy which was the outcome of a theory of defeatism could easily be avoided consistent with military requirements. That memorandum was not even forwarded to the Government of India and the advice of the Ministers, though it ultimately secured some alteration in the detailed application of the policy, could not undo the total mischief which has caused an unprecedented social and economic disaster in many parts of Bengal.

Lastly, let me refer to Midnapore. I do not for a moment ignore that the political disturbances in some parts of this district were of a serious character. One can well understand any legitimate steps taken to combat lawlessness and open defiance of authority. But if a section of the people challenged Government, the local officers were themselves reported to have broken the basic canons of civilised administration and carried on a relentless campaign of repression, irrespective of the guilt of the people concerned.

Shooting of innocent people, looting and destruction of property, instigating one community against the other, attacks on women, these were amongst the charges that reached us from various independent sources, many of whom lent no support whatsoever to any subsersive movement. Detailed information was handed over to us, including lists of houses that were raided and burnt by or under the direction of the police and the military. I handed over one such long list to some of the highest officials in the Home Department on the very day of the fateful cyclone of 16th October and urged them to see that the barbarous acts complained of came to a stop immediately. Then came the terrible blow from nature on 16th October last. One would have thought this natural catastrophe, which had caused such enormous destruction of life and property, would also serve to wash away all the bitterness and the sore from the minds of the officials and the local public alike and bind them together in noble determination to alleviate human suffering. The callousness that I witnessed on the part of some of the officials from the highest to the lowest in the face of this terrible blow was something unparallelled in the annals of civilised administration. We have been taught to hate Nazi horrors. But the horrors of oppression under British rule that Bengal and India witnessed during the last five months compare very favourably with the reports that British propagandists circulate about Axis tortures in lands under their occupation.

I beg of the House to understand one point in this connection. It is true that some of the officers posted in the district of Midnapore are Muslims; but my attack has not been against Muslim officers as such. Indeed, the number of Hindu officers against whom allegations were made are greater in number; and what to say of the British officers, specially at the headquarters, whose supreme indifference, if not hostility, was a sad commentary on the low level to which British traditions have sunk in this country. My attack is against the officers as such, irrespective of their politics or racial or communal attachment.

My first charge about Midnapore is the criminal and deliberate delay in publishing the news of the havoc caused on 16th October. The Defence of India Rules have been misapplied in many directions. But a more disgraceful application of these rules has not taken place anywhere in India. The happy family of civil servants suppressed the news for nearly a fortnight. Even appeals for help were not allowed to see the light of the day. The explanation that was given was utterly devoid of justification. The fact remains that most valuable time was thus lost and people suffered and died for want of co-ordinated and organised relief. The District Officer himself failed to rise equal to the occasion and his previous prejudice against the people, who were called rebels, prevented him from doing what any responsible officer was bound to do to mitigate the sufferings of the people. Some roads were cleared by him and he took some further action. But his frame of mind was made known to us when he sent his report recommending that in view of the political misdeeds of the people not only should Government withhold relief, but it should not permit any non-official organisation to conduct relief in the affected area for one month. The Governor himself

after remaining silent for an amazingly long period called for the co-operation of all sections of the people for conducting relief operations. But there was repeated obstruction when we attempted to create an atmosphere in this district which would have placed all political controversies into the background and roused the people to a united sense of corporate activity in organising and distributing relief. Three of the Ministers including myself were in Midnapore about 12 days after the cyclone. The sufferings of the people that we witnessed were beyond description. Relief was then in a hopeless state of confusion and people were denied the barest facilities for movement and work. We discussed matters with leaders inside and outside the jail. I found that there was a genuine anxiety on the part of all to work together for alleviation of the great suffering that fell on the people of the district. What was wanted was a little bold imagination on the part of Government. After we returned to Calcutta, for two days we discussed the situation with the high command of the happy coterie at the Secretariat, and I felt disgusted at the obstructive and unrealistic attitude of these so-called public servants. The Chief Minister agreed with the policy of help and sympathy that we recommended. But here again we were prevented from doing what statesmanship and justice both demanded. Not only was the political situation not eased in spite of offer of co-operation of a large number of political prisoners and many people outside the jail, but Government pursued the mad and sinister policy of relief by day, and raid and repression by night. A systematic burning and looting of houses—and I make this statement with a full sense of deliberation—of all conditions of people had gone on unbridled before the cyclone; even after the cyclone, I feel ashamed to state, this was pursued in some parts of the district in spite of Government orders to the contrary. I have myself made enquiries, and I have in my possession names of persons who were raided, robbed and humiliated before and after the cyclone. Copies of some of the lists I had personally handed over to high officials, but I have never been informed as regards the action taken against the offenders who masqueraded in the garb of upholders of law and order. Indeed, allegations of oppression were made by people in our presence and in the presence of local officers, but we were helpless to give them relief. I shall not discuss this aspect of the question in further details because Midnapore will, I dare say, figure in the debates of this session. I shall end by saying that even about a month ago reports of raids on villages had reached us and they disclosed most lamentable incidents of rape and outrage of helpless women carried on systematically by the guardians of law and order. I have with me the statement of the sufferers themselves, and they constitute a disgrace on the Government of this country. The police would not record their statements, and there is none to give them protection against the brutalities committed by the pillars of democracy and liberty. I wrote to the Chief Minister almost immediately after the occurrence, and I am waiting to know from him what has been the fate of any enquiry that might have been made into the allegations. Yesterday it was the Muslim women of Eastern Bengal who were the victims. Today it is the Hindu women of Midnapore who have shared the same fate. I have often wondered during the last few

weeks what would have happened if even one single white woman had been the victim of the lust and cruelty of people supported by the Government of the day. The press is gagged. Public opinion is muzzled. But this House is yet beyond the jurisdiction of the Defence of India Rules. We should unanimously demand an independent enquiry into all such incidents. Indeed, let us know, let the world know the whole truth about Midnapore, not through carefully prepared reports of the culprits themselves or of their supporters, but through the agency of an impartial and independent tribunal who would give the fullest protection to the people who would either complain or depose against officials.

The picture of provincial autonomy that I have imperfectly painted is only illustrative and not exhaustive. The charges that I have thought it my duty to bring forward are of a severe character, and I have done so with a full sense of responsibility. I would much like the personages whose acts and policies I have criticised to come and stand face to face before the Bengal Legislative Assembly, which after all is the only representative body of the people of this province under the existing constitution. Would they dare do it? Would they even dare meet an informal assembly of its members and justify what they are doing? They have the supreme advantage of indulging in their designs behind the screen and setting up Hon'ble Ministers before the House to defend them. What the Ministers will say or do, I do not know. But I would ask them with all the earnestness at my command that their loyalty to their country demands of them to state categorically how they are being hampered in carrying on a sound administration of the province, calculated to advance the welfare of the people.

When we come here as members of the legislature, we seek to reach the goal of our national freedom through the path of constitutional struggle. The history of countries, which still form part of the British Empire but had to wring from unwilling hands the charter of their liberty, affords glorious examples of constitutional struggle and victory. One has to read the histories of Canada and Australia for the purpose of recalling how sharp was the difference between legal power and constitutional right in these Dominions and how even many a Governor was actually recalled at the instance of the legislature for their flagrant acts of arbitrary dictatorship. Even in England a king had to take his eternal rest when he came into an open clash with the people, who favoured their own rights and liberties more than their loyalty to the sovereign. The Government of India Act of 1935 will not indicate the manner and method of fighting for our constitutional rights. The legislatures of India will have to create new usages and conventions and demand the abrogation of arbitrary rule, even though the perpetrators of misdeeds feel themselves temporarily secure amidst the protecting corridors of Government House and the Bengal Secretariat. After all, what is it that we want in this province and country of ours? We have as much right to throw off the yoke of British domination as England is anxious to save herself from Hitler's profane hands. Are we to be guilty of treason or branded as fifth columnists if we re-echo President Roosevelt's historic

utterance that it is much better for a nation to die standing on its feet than to live on its bended knees? We claim the liberty to shape the administrative policy of this province in accordance with the real needs of the people. We want that the will of the people will be reflected truly and forcibly in the voices of the members of the legislature, and unmindful of all consequences, its members will compel the executive to proceed on lines which are in accordance with national interests. If in the process of so doing, the legislature finds disturbers and obstructionists, seated on high pedestals standing in the way, it must fearlessly demand their removal from office. After all we have witnessed how special responsibilities, now lying heavily on high shoulders, were quietly and hurriedly given the go-bye in the adjoining territory of Burma and the grand protectors of that country took to their heels, leaving the people of Burma to their fate, and incidentally to Japan. Today there is only one consideration that we shall demand to see fulfilled and that is unswerving loyalty to the interest of the people of the country. If an official however high, fails to do so, he is the worst Quisling imaginable and he has no place in this province. Let me make this appeal to all sections of this House so that we may unite in our own struggle to uproot tyranny and oppression. We have often fought with each other and thereby not only weakened ourselves but have strengthened those reactionary forces whose very continuance depends on our differences. Today in the crisis that threatens us, not as Hindus or Muslims but as Bengalees and Indians, let us demand the inauguration of an administration which will recognise our just economic and political rights. A Hindu and a Muslim may differ on many things. But do they not equally detest slavery—and it is for ending the state of intolerable slavery that I am asking for your support and co-operation.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: May I know whether Government will allow the full speech of Dr. Mookerjee to be published in the press?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I cannot say that.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: There was one special motion.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I shall consider that later.

Mr. KIRAN SANKAR ROY: May I repeat the question which has been put by Mr. Atul Chandra Sen? I would like to know from the Chief Minister who is also the Home Minister whether he will allow the statement of Dr. Mookerjee to be printed in full in the press. I want a reply now if convenient.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I would like to consider that point.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: He cannot answer that off-hand. He will consider the point and make a statement later on. The House stands adjourned——(Uproar.)

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the House cannot adjourn. The speeches made in this House are privileged, and I beg of you, Sir, to stand up for the rights and privileges of this House.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes. I will see to that.

(The House was then adjourned for 10 minutes for Magrib prayer.)

(After adjournment.)

Mr. K. SHAHABUDDIN: It is a Parliamentary convention that the Prime Minister—in our case the Chief Minister—replies to a statement made by a Minister who had resigned and made his statement. We want to know if in this case the Hon'ble Chief Minister is going to make a reply to the statement made by Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The convention, as far as I can ascertain, is this: In the past three Ministers had resigned and they made their statements successively. Of course under the rules it is permissible that a Minister can make a reply to the statement made by the Minister who has resigned. But here there is no such convention. In the past the Hon'ble Mr. Nausher Ali resigned, the Hon'ble Mr Shamsuddin resigned and then the Hon'ble Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sarker resigned, and all of them made their statements. On each occasion there was only one statement and there was no other statement.

Mr. K. SHAHABUDDIN: With due deference to you, Sir, may I beg to point out that in the case of Mr. Nausher Ali and Mr. Shamsuddin the then Chief Minister did reply and in the case of Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sarker the Chief Minister was absent and in his absence the then Finance Minister, Mr. Suhrawardy, did reply to the statement, and I again beg to submit that it is a very well-established Parliamentary convention that a reply is given by the Chief Minister to a statement like this and specially in this case, in Dr. Mookerjee's statement explaining the reasons for his resignation, there have been very serious and grave charges against permanent officials and the head of the executive. Therefore, we think this House is entitled to know whether the Chief Minister is going to answer or his silence should be taken as supporting and accepting the version of that statement.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, I know very well that the words of the Chief Minister are very sweet to the Opposition, and I can realise that they are on the tenter-hooks of impatience whether the Chief Minister will make a statement which will shake the Cabinet and give the Opposition an opportunity of coming into power. (Interruptions.)

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I would ask members not to use any language which is unparliamentary.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: Will you, Sir, kindly ask the Chief Minister to address the House in a manner which is befitting his position?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I hope the Hon'ble Chief Minister will be allowed to make his statement uninterruptedly. It is you who wanted his statement and therefore you should hear him patiently.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: We wish to hear the Hon'ble Chief Minister uninterruptedly, but we would also like you to look at the Chief Minister when he is addressing the House and request him to do so decorously.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I shall consent to make a statement if my friends who are anxious to hear me behave properly. Now Sir, I think I can say that the occasion which has compelled my friend, Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee to make his statement is of an exceptional character. Fortunately for us these occasions do not arise every day, and it is not possible therefore to guide our policy in the light of previous statements made on similar occasions. I know, Sir, that there is a rule which permits any Minister to make a statement after a Minister who has resigned his office has made a statement explanatory of the circumstances which led to his resignation. I know I have got that privilege, and I can avail myself of that privilege or I may not, but on this occasion I can tell the House that I did not know before the statement was made what actually Dr. Mookerjee was going to say. I have not been able to consider carefully all the parts of the statement relating to various matters, and I propose to consider that statement very carefully. As at present advised, I feel that I shall have to make a statement. When I will make that statement and in what connection, it is a matter entirely for me to decide. I promise I will make a statement later on.

As regards another matter about which some of my friends have been anxious to know I wish to make the Government position clear, that is, as regards the publication of this statement, Government have not been in a position to consider this statement as I have already said because the statement was not with us before. We did not know the statement before it was actually made in the House. The statement is a privileged one, and it can be published or it may not be published according as the Speaker directs. If the speech is published outside, there is no privilege and if any newspaper wishes to publish it, it can do so on its own responsibility. If the statement does not attract any provisions of any law or rules made under any law, there would be no trouble. But if after consideration Government find that many portions of the statement do attract penal provisions of any law, it would be for the Government to decide what action it will take. Briefly stated, therefore, we say nothing at the present moment one way or the other. Newspapers are at liberty to consult whomsoever they like and publish the statement, but if they do publish it will be on their own responsibility.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Do we take it that so far as Government are concerned there will be no instructions issued, particularly from the Press Adviser, and that the newspapers would be entirely left to publish it or not on their own responsibility?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I would ask the Press Adviser not to volunteer his advice. The Press Adviser would keep silent, and it is for the press to decide what they will do.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: May I draw your attention to the very serious contents of the statement that the Hon'ble Chief Minister has made today? We understood that all utterances in this House were privileged and that publication of these under parliamentary practice was also privileged. May I ask him to tell the House whether the executive can take away this privilege from us of publishing a statement of the character which has just now been made before the House?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: With regard to the publication of the proceedings of this House I can assure you that the statement will be published, but so far as its publication in the press is concerned, the responsibility does not lie with me. The parliamentary practice, I agree with you, is that when a statement is made in the House Government should not suppress it. But as an old parliamentarian Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi knows very well that in the House of Commons there have been many cases of defamation arising out of publishing statements made in the House of Commons outside. So I will not take any responsibility so far as its publication outside the House is concerned. But I can assure the House once again that it will be part of the proceedings *in toto*.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Even a reproduction will not be privileged?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Of course all the privileges will be there. It will be published in the official proceedings volume which will be available for sale.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: You hold that when the official volume is published, the reproduction will be correct; but what about its reproduction tonight by the press? If Dr. Mookerjee's speech is not published tomorrow, the privilege of the House in your view is not disturbed in any manner if the Executive Government suppress it.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: May we have further enlightenment from the Hon'ble the Chief Minister through you, Sir? The very mention that he has made about the newspapers or the press itself on its own responsibility wanting to know what they should do, or seeking the advice of the Press Adviser—is that a mild hint, or a suggestion, or a threat, or is it just to allow them to understand their own position correctly?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I will modify my statement further. The Press Adviser might tender an advice, but will not enforce any order. It will then be for the Press people to decide whether they will take his advice or not.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi, all that I can say in the matter is—and it is my personal opinion—that if the statement is not allowed to be published outside, it will be a curtailment of the privileges of this House.

Question of Privilege.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: I rise on a point of privilege, Sir. Fridays are allotted for non-official business, but on this occasion we have dealt with some Government business.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have got an assurance that for this particular Friday which has been devoted to Government business you will get another non-official day.

Application for Leave of Absence.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do permit Mr. Pratul Chandra Ganguly, representing the East Bengal Municipal General Constituency, and Mr. Jnanendra Chandra Majumdar, representing Mymensingh East General Constituency, to be absent for the period from 16th February, 1942, till the end of the present session for which they find they are unable to attend the meetings of the Assembly.

The motion was put and agreed to

The Bengal Motor Vehicles Rules, 1943.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: In accordance with the provisions of sub-section (3) of section 133 of the Bengal Motor Vehicles Act, 1939, I lay before the House the amendments to the Bengal Motor Vehicles Rules, 1943, made by the Governor under the provisions of the Act.

SPECIAL MOTION.

Fast undertaken by Mr. Gandhi and his unconditional release.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee.

Mr. A. F. STARK: Before Dr. Mookerjee moves his motion would you inform us how this motion is admissible? Rule 95(2) states that "no motion shall be admissible if it relates to a matter which is not primarily the concern of the Provincial Government." I would also like to draw your attention, Sir, to the last two lines of rule 95(1) which says that special motions shall not be moved except with the consent of the Speaker and of the Minister to whose department the motion relates. Could you say to which Minister and which department this motion relates and how is it a matter which primarily concerns the Provincial Government?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Stark, I shall have to tell you that this motion which requires the consent of the Speaker and of the Minister in charge of the Home Department has already received my consent and

also the consent of the Minister concerned—I mean, of the Hon'ble the Chief Minister. With regard to time and date of discussion, the Hon'ble Minister has no objection to this motion being moved today. With regard to your point that it is not primarily the concern of this Government, I hold that the fast of Mr. Gandhi and its consequences may have repercussions in this province also and, therefore, I have given my consent to this motion, and possibly from that consideration the Hon'ble Minister has also given his consent. As regards the time, the Hon'ble Minister has stated in writing that he has no objection to the motion being moved after today's business is finished. Therefore, I have now called on Dr. Mookerjee to move his motion.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Sir, I beg to move the following motion under section 95 of the Assembly Procedure Rules:—

"This Assembly is of opinion that the Government of Bengal should immediately take necessary steps to represent to the Government of India that in view of the fast undertaken by Mahatma Gandhi in the present state of his health he should be unconditionally released forthwith."

Sir, let me make it clear in the first place that this resolution is not intended to raise any controversial political issue. The life of one of the greatest men of the age is today at stake. That life considered valuable and sacred by millions of men irrespective of caste, religion and politics can be saved from an impending peril by his immediate release Bengal wants her voice to be added to the demand of the rest of India that Mahatma Gandhi be forthwith released from detention and the fast brought to an immediate end. Already the relations between the Government and the people are sufficiently strained, and we do not want any further experimentation to be made with Mahatma Gandhi's life which may well embitter mutual relations to an extent from which recovery will be impossible. I hope, Sir, this resolution will be supported from all sides of the House and carried without much discussion.

Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Sir, in according our support to the motion we want to make our position clear. As is widely known, we are strongly opposed to the political stand taken by Mr. Gandhi and his followers, but in deference to the strong feelings of reverence entertained by a large section of our Hindu brethren towards his person we associate ourselves with the motion.

Mr. KIRAN SANKAR ROY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I rise to support the motion that has been moved by Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee. To us who belong to the Indian National Congress and have the honour to be Mahatmaji's followers anything concerning him is so personal that I do not wish to say much. I do not wish, following the example of Dr. Mookerjee, to raise any controversial matters on this occasion. Sir, Mahatma Gandhi is well over seventy years of age: he is not strong enough today to stand the strain of even a limited fast. It is true that he has already declared that it is not going to be a fast unto death. It is also true that he has expressed his intention to survive this ordeal. But, Sir,

considering the condition of his health, we have apprehensions that a disaster may happen and collapse may come quickly and collapse may come all of a sudden. God forbid, if that happens, I do not want to anticipate what will be the repercussions. I am not using any threat, but the possibility of an impending tragedy overwhelms me and, I am sure, almost everybody in this House. Sir, I do not want it to be said later on about this House that it neither realised the gravity of the situation nor appreciated the value of this life and did nothing to prevent a second crucifixion of flesh. I hope, Sir, that this motion would be accepted by the House unanimously.

Mr. DAVID HENDRY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, we greatly deplore the decision which has been made by Mahatma Gandhi to enter upon this dangerous fast, and we are equally greatly concerned at the risks to which he has exposed his health in his later years. But, Sir, we think that a reasonable way out has already been provided to him by the Government of India. They have already agreed that if he wishes to fast outside, then they will release him for that purpose. We consider that that offer is capable of reasonable acceptance, and we do not consider that we in this House should forward the recommendation which has been proposed and therefore with the greatest respect and anxiety for Mahatma Gandhi we in this party feel that we cannot support this motion. We therefore oppose the motion.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, on behalf of the party to which I have the honour to belong I wholeheartedly associate myself with the motion so eloquently moved by Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee and so ably supported by my esteemed friend Mr. Kiran Sankar Roy. The calamity that is impending over this country has got to be averted and this Assembly has only done its barest duty by bringing the matter up so prominently before the House in the shape of a motion which Dr. Mookerjee has placed before us.

The Hon'ble Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: Sir, I wholeheartedly support the motion that has been so ably moved by my friend Dr. Mookerjee.

Sir, I do not want to introduce any controversial issues. I only say that Mahatmaji's life is a valuable asset for the nation. For very many years I accepted him as the leader of the movement when I was in the Congress. Even today I believe his life is a valuable asset for the nation. I wholeheartedly support the motion.

Mr. SYED BADRUDDOJA: Sir, on behalf of the Progressive Assembly Party to which I have the honour to belong, I wholeheartedly associate myself with the feeling that has been expressed in this House by various sections. While fully appreciating the importance of such a life, I want to make it clear on the floor of this House that I dissociate myself entirely from the politics of Mahatma Gandhi and do not subscribe to his school of thought. But this is no reason why I should not associate myself with the

views expressed by leaders representing various sections of this House in favour of one of the greatest men of the East who has done so much for humanity's cause.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, after all that has been said, there remains very little for me to say——

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Sir, I am very sorry to interfere. May I rise on a point of order? Can Ministers belonging to the Council of Ministers speak in this House as leaders of different sections of parties supporting the Government? My humble view is, Sir, that a Minister sitting on the Treasury Bench can speak only on behalf of the Government and not on behalf of any party or section. Therefore, Sir, I should like to have your ruling whether the statements of the Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu, the Hon'ble Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmed and now the Chief Minister——

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: You do not know what I am going to say. Why do you anticipate it?

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Sir, I am here to establish my privilege as a member of this House. I want you to tell me——

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, I rise on a point of order. He has not heard what I am going to say.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Are they speaking—and they must be taken as speaking—on behalf of the Government?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Siddiqi, in part I agree with you. Hon'ble Ministers have got two functions. They are here representing the Government and on that point I entirely agree with you. Whatever they say, they say on behalf of the Government and it will be presumed that they say on behalf of the Government. But if they on some occasions want to exercise their function as leaders of certain groups and want to speak on behalf of certain parties, they are entitled to do so and I cannot prevent them. As regards the Chief Minister, you have not heard anything.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The objection should have been taken when the two Ministers made their statements. I was going to say something when I was interrupted.

Sir, one point is absolutely clear. If the Central Government takes action in any matter in any particular direction, it is not open to a Provincial Government to interfere in matters which are the concern of the Central Government. A Provincial Government, as such, therefore cannot offer any advice to the Central Government in matters of policy or with regard to any action that may be taken by them. The motion that has been moved by Dr. Mookerjee is simply a recommendation to the Central Government on humanitarian grounds to set free Mr. Gandhi. On that point every member of the House is entitled—whether he is a member of the Government or is a mere member of the Assembly—to express his opinion as to whether he shares with Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee the almost universally voiced feeling in this House in favour of the unconditional release of Mr. Gandhi.

Sir, what I propose to do is this. I will forward the proceedings of this House for the consideration of the Central Government. It will be for the Central Government to consider whether they will take into consideration the expression of views of the various sections of the House, as reflected in the statements of the leaders. They will certainly take into account also the views that have been expressed by the Leader of the European Party. So far as Government are concerned, Government, as such, have got nothing to say, but as individuals, as mere human beings, as mere members of this House, it is open to everyone—Minister or no Minister—to say whether he will be glad to see Mr. Gandhi released from custody. Sir, that feeling I also share. (Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: "Government does not.") Government may or may not, but I may have my own personal feelings in certain matters, and I have got to see that it is not merely the Government that is functioning, but that the views of the people find fullest expression before the authorities who have got to deal with decisions on matters of an important public character.

With these words I promise that the proceedings of this House will be forwarded in its entirety for the consideration of the Government of India.

The motion of Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee, that this Assembly is of opinion that the Government of Bengal should immediately take necessary steps to represent to the Government of India that in view of the fast undertaken by Mahatma Gandhi in the present state of his health he should be unconditionally released forthwith, was then put and agreed to

Adjournment.

The House was then adjourned at 7-20 p.m. till 3-15 p.m. on Monday, the 15th February, 1943, at the Assembly House, Calcutta

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the Provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Monday, the 15th February, 1943, at 3-15 p.m.

Present:

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. SYED JALALUDDIN HASHEMY) in the Chair, 7 Hon'ble Ministers and 206 members.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Appointment to the post of Second Assistant Superintendent, Bengal Government Press.

***11. Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Finance Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that Government have sanctioned the creation of the post of 2nd Assistant Superintendent in the Bengal Government Press?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the circumstances under which the said post has been created?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the post was advertised in the *Calcutta Gazette* and other local newspapers inviting applications from eligible candidates?

(*d*) If the answer to (*c*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason thereof?

(*e*) If the answer to (*c*) is in the negative, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of advertising the post in the *Calcutta Gazette* and other local newspapers as usual to invite applications from eligible candidates and arranging a competitive examination through the Public Service Commission, Bengal?

MINISTER in charge of the FINANCE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) To strengthen the permanent staff and to provide a leave reserve.

(*c*) to (*e*) The vacancy was not advertised. Under the Communal Ratio Rules it was to be filled by a non-Muslim and instead of advertising this vacancy it was decided to ask the Public Service Commission, if they approved Government's proposal to appoint Mr. A. K. Guha who had worked most satisfactorily for three years in a temporary capacity and was the Public Service Commission's only nominee in 1941 when owing to an oversight the vacancy in the post of 1st Assistant Superintendent was advertised on a general basis instead of as reserved for Muslims. The Public Service Commission indicated their approval and Mr. Guha was appointed.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when this appointment was made?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I cannot answer that question just now. I shall try and find out and give the reply later.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons why Government did not think it desirable to ask for fresh candidates?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: A reply to that has been given in the printed answer. Instead of advertising we asked the Public Service Commission.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what was the post which was held by Mr. Guha in a temporary capacity?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: He was holding the very post in which he was confirmed.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if in making this appointment the claim of another officer was superseded?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: If that question is pressed, I shall ascertain the facts and give an answer.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he has taken any step to rectify the mistake committed by the Public Service Commission?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The mistake was committed by the Public Service Commission. But the deficiency in the Muslim ratio was made up by subsequent appointments.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: The Chief Minister has said that he will ascertain facts and answer later. It is no use asking supplementary questions now. I suggest that the question be held over.

(The question was held over.)

Resignation of office by the Commissioners of the Comilla Municipality.

***12. Maulvi MOFIZUDDIN AHMED:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state whether any commissioner of the Comilla Municipality in the district of Tippera has resigned recently?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the number of them that have resigned and the number of them that have not resigned?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) how the municipal administration of Comilla Municipality is being run now; and

(ii) what are the functions and duties of the non-resigning commissioners now?

MINISTER in charge of the PUBLIC HEALTH and LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu): (*a*) and (*b*) Yes, 10 commissioners of the Comilla Municipality out of a total number of 18 tendered resignation of their office as municipal commissioners and the rest did not.

(*c*) (*i*) Mr. A. M. Nasiruddin, Second Additional District Magistrate, Tippera, has been appointed under the Defence of India Rules to administer the municipality.

(*ii*) Nil.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Comilla Municipality has been superseded by Government?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Yes.

Mr. SHAHEDALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Maulvi Mafizuddin Ahmed is one of the nominated members of the Comilla Municipality who has not yet resigned?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: No question of resignation arises with regard to the rest, namely 8, because the municipality has been superseded.

Mr. SHAHEDALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Maulvi Mafizuddin Ahmed is one of the 8?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: No.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what are the reasons for superseding the Comilla Municipality?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Ten Commissioners out of 18 including the Vice-Chairman resigned and the Chairman was arrested. There was deadlock in the administration of the municipality and there was no time to wait for the usual procedure to be followed as Comilla is in a vulnerable area and as such special measures had to be adopted.

Mr. SHAHEDALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Second Additional District Magistrate had asked the non-resigning Commissioners to attend the municipal office?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I have no information.

Mr. SHAHEDALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to make some arrangements for non-resigning members to attend the municipality?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Those members have ceased to exist as members because the municipality has been superseded.

Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMED: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the names of those 10 Commissioners of the Comilla Municipality who have resigned?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I am sorry I have not got the names before me.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government are taking any step to fill up these vacancies by election and run the municipality in a normal way?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I am afraid that no question of filling up any vacancies arises because there are no vacancies now as the municipality has been superseded

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the Bengal Municipal Local Self-Government Act has been scrapped so far as the Municipality of Comilla is concerned?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: So far as the Defence of India Rules are concerned they have been applied in the matter of supersession, but even in the case of a superseded municipality other provisions of the Bengal Municipal Act do apply and will continue to apply.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether they contemplate making arrangements to hold any general election of the Comilla Municipality and what is the period of supersession?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: So far as the general election is concerned, the matter has not yet been considered

Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMED: Is it a fact that there was a date fixed for holding the general election of the Comilla Municipality?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: There must have been a date fixed if the general election was going to be held.

Supply of certain essential commodities in Chittagong district.

The Hon'ble Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca: The answer to this question of which notice was given long ago requires some modification and therefore with your permission I propose to answer the question in a modified form.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This is a question of the last session and the Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur suggests that he will give a fresh answer modifying the answer as printed and his present reply will accommodate all the factors involved. So, I think the question may be held over.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: But, Sir, the Hon'ble the Nawab Bahadur is prepared to make a reply in a modified form now and in that view there is no need to hold it over.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: If the Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur so desires I have no objection.

*13. **Dr. SANAULLAH:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether any steps have been taken by the Government for the supply of (1) rice, (2) salt, (3) sugar and (4) kerosene, in the district of Chittagong; and

(*ii*) what amount of those articles was taken out of the district since the 1st of April, 1942?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any measures have been taken to check the rise in the price of the abovementioned commodities?

(*c*) If so, what?

MINISTER in charge of the COMMERCE and LABOUR DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) (*i*) and (*b*) Yes.

(*a*) (*ii*) No figures are available.

(*c*) A Price Control Advisory Committee, under the chairmanship of the President of the Chamber of Commerce, in which both dealers' and consumers' interests are represented, is functioning very satisfactorily. Prices are fixed by the District Magistrate generally on the recommendation of this Committee and it draws up its recommendation after taking into consideration all factors that operate in deciding the price level of a particular commodity.

So far as common rice is concerned the stock of rice and paddy is sufficient for the present needs of the district and supply from outside in any large quantity has not yet been necessary.

Attempts at surreptitious removal of essential commodities with a view to profiteering were stopped by placing temporary restrictions on booking of these goods by rail. That ban has now been withdrawn under Government orders.

When profiteers attempted to create an artificial shortage by withholding stocks from sale, as had happened in the case of rice and salt, certain big stocks were requisitioned under the Defence of India Rules and were made available to the public at controlled prices.

Figures obtained from railway stations showed that a lot of sugar was coming into the district from "black markets" operating outside Chittagong but dealers were forcing up the price by creating an artificial shortage. An order has therefore been passed controlling the delivery of sugar consignments and their subsequent disposal. Results so far obtained have been satisfactory and though certain dealers are very sore at being prevented from profiteering it has been possible for the man in the street to get a small ration of sugar at controlled rate. No controlled import of sugar has taken place from May to September but one thousand maunds were requisitioned by the Department and allotted to the district in October.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: May I rise to a point of order, Sir? Is the Hon'ble Minister entitled to add anything to the language of the answer as given in the printed form? Is the Hon'ble Minister in a proper position to add to this paragraph out of another paper which I have not got before me?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Well, he can alter it, and I have suggested that the question can be held over if there is any objection. But, as proposed by Dr. Sanyal, the House wanted to hear the modified answer which I have allowed the Nawab Bahadur to make on the floor of the House.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: If there is a written answer, Sir, I am doubtful if the language of that written answer can be withdrawn or altered unless it is fully withdrawn and a fresh answer is brought forward.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: I suggest, Sir, that the question be held over.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I submit, Sir, that the reply to be given by an Hon'ble Minister to a question need not be confined to the reply as had been printed. Whether that reply will be in the form of the written reply as circulated or anything in addition to that is entirely the Hon'ble Minister's concern, and I do not think the rules provide anywhere anything or suggests anything which debars the Hon'ble Minister from altering the printed reply

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: If it is the intention of the House that the question should be held over, I have no objection.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: I suggest, Sir, that it be held over so that we might have the opportunity of putting supplementary questions.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Then the question is held over

Financial help by Government under the Bengal Aid to Industries Act to Hindus and Muslims.

***14. Babu ASHUTOSH LAHIRI:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Industries Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing—

(*a*) the amount of financial help that has been paid by Government under the Bengal Aid to Industries Act from April, 1937, up to August, 1942;

(*b*) the number of (1) Hindu and (2) Muslim recipients of this aid;

(*c*) the amount that has been paid to (1) Hindus and (2) Muslims; and

(*d*) the amount that has been recovered from (1) Hindus and (2) Muslims;

that has been advanced as loan under the Act?

MINISTER in charge of the INDUSTRIES DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): A statement is laid on the Table.

Statement referred to in reply to clauses (a) to (d) of starred question No. 14.

(a) Amount of financial help that has been paid by Government under the Bengal State Aid to Industries Act from April, 1937, up to August, 1942	Rs.87,580.
(b) Number of (1) Hindu and (2) Muslim recipients of this aid ..	(1) Hindus—31. (2) Muslims—14.
(c) Amount that has been paid to (1) Hindus and (2) Muslims	(1) Hindus—Rs.57,480. (2) Muslims—Rs.11,950.
(d) Amount that has been recovered from (1) Hindus and (2) Muslims.	(1) Hindus—Rs.24,764. (2) Muslims—Rs.3,278.

Government action against the Fascist Group at Dacca regarding the incident of the 8th March, 1942.

***15. Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department aware—

(*i*) that an Anti-Fascist Conference was held on the 8th March, 1942, at Dacca under the presidency of Mr. Bankim Chandra Mukherji;

(*ii*) that a batch of 50 young men came in clash with the organisers and volunteers of the conference and that there was a serious fight between the two groups; and

(*iii*) that the police had to open fire on the mob and as a result one person was killed and several others were injured?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) what action, if any, have the Government taken to trace and find out these miscreants who opposed the Anti-Fascist Conference and their connection, if any, with any other political party in Bengal; and

(*ii*) if no action has been taken, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state reasons therefor?

MINISTER in charge of the HOME DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq): (*a*) (*i*) Yes.

(*ii*) The number of intruders was about 100.

(*iii*) One person is known to have been killed as a result of police-firing, and two injured.

(*b*) A case under sections 148, 149 and 302, Indian Penal Code, was started against the intruders and 15 persons were arrested but they could not be sent up for trial as sufficient evidence was not forthcoming.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the names of those 15 persons who were arrested?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The names are not with me now, but if they are wanted I can supply them later on.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether proceedings under sections 148, 149 and 302 have been dropped?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: As I find from the papers, charge-sheets were not submitted: official reports were submitted, but there was no evidence against them.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Sir, in reply to question (*b*)(*i*), namely, "what action, if any, have the Government taken to trace and find out these miscreants who opposed the Anti-Fascist Conference and their connection, if any, with any other political party in Bengal" the Hon'ble Minister says, "A case was started against the intruders and 15 persons were arrested, but they could not be sent up for trial as sufficient evidence was not forthcoming." May I know what has the Hon'ble Minister got to say with regard to the latter portion of the question which has not been answered?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: With regard to question (*b*)(*i*) all I can say is, that steps were taken to trace and find out the miscreants and 15 persons were arrested, but they could not be sent up for trial for want of sufficient evidence against them. As regards their connection, if any, with any other political party in Bengal, no enquiry was made because it was not necessary to do so in connection with these cases, and as regards other points I have got nothing further to add.

Maulvi ABUL HASHIM: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if any measure under the Defence of India Rules has been applied against any of them?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I do not remember.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Sir, the heading of the question as given here is misleading. The question enquires as to what was the Government action against the Fascist Group at Dacca regarding the incident of the 8th March, 1942, but as a matter of fact, we find that there is no mention of Fascist Group in the reply. May we know why do the Government presume that these 15 men belonged to the Fascist Group? I submit that the headline may be corrected accordingly.

(No reply was forthcoming.)

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, there has been no reply to Mr. Sen's question. I think it is the business of the Assembly Department to put headlines, but once your attention has been drawn there must be some reply forthcoming. We find in the body of the question terms like "Fascist" and "Anti-Fascist." I believe there is some confusion that those who opposed the Anti-Fascist Conference were Fascists. But I think the Assembly Department is right in putting that headline.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: In that conference there might have been persons who did not belong to the Fascist Group.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will look into the matter and decide on it later on.

Compensation for the sea-going sloops acquired by Government at Chittagong.

*16. **Dr. SANAULLAH:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether he has received—

(*i*) any telegram from the Secretary, Boat Owners' Association, for giving full prices and compensations for the sea-going Akyab type sloops now concentrated at Daudkandi; and

(*ii*) or any verbal representation from any member of the Bengal Legislative Assembly to the same effect?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps, if any, the Government have taken or propose to take in the matter?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) (*i*) The answer is in the affirmative.

(*ii*) I cannot recall any such representation.

(*b*) Necessary instructions have been issued for payment of compensation in the shape of monthly hire charges for these sloops according to the merits of the claims of individual owners.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Can the Hon'ble Minister give the House an idea of the rates of monthly hire charges?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: No, Sir, I cannot.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether Government will pay these people along with hire any depreciation charges?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That question was not considered, but if that matter comes up and any representation is made, Government will certainly have to come to a decision.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Has the Government taken any steps to have these boats insured against possible total or partial loss?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That is a new matter, and I cannot answer unless I get sufficient notice.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: It is not a new matter because other Governments have taken action in this respect. Has the Bengal Government seen to it that when the period of hire finishes, the man will get something for his boat?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Government will consider it if they get proper notice.

Sugarcane cultivation in Goalundo subdivision.

*18. **Mr. AHMED ALI MRIDHA:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture Department aware—

(*i*) that sugarcane cultivation is very congenial in the soil of the subdivision of Goalundo;

(*ii*) that wild boars and jackals damage the crop;

(*iii*) that there is no sugar mill for consumption of the cane from this part of the Province;

(*iv*) that as a result sugarcane cultivation does not find favour with the cultivators; and

(*v*) that cultivators do not possess a gun to protect their crops against damage by wild animals?

(*b*) If the answers to (*a*) (*iii*) and (*v*) are in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps do the Government propose taking—

(*i*) for the issue of guns to cultivators; and

(*ii*) for setting up sugar mills in the said area?

MINISTER in charge of the AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Hashem Ali Khan): (*a*) (*i*) and (*iii*) Yes.

(*ii*) It is reported that the crop is sometimes damaged by wild boars and jackals.

(*iv*) No; where the soil is congenial to the cultivation of sugarcane, it is grown by the cultivators who for the most part crush the cane themselves and prepare *gur* for sale in the local markets.

(*v*) and (*b*) (*i*) Guns are issued to the cultivators under the provisions of the Arms Act and Government circulars in the matter. Petitions for guns from the cultivators to protect crops, etc., are favourably considered.

(*ii*) The setting up of sugar mills is a matter for private enterprise.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that even last year ending 31st March, 1942, applications were made by cultivators for licences, but licences were not issued?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: This does not concern my department, and I cannot answer it.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: In answer (*v*) and (*b*)(*i*), it is stated, "Petitions for guns from the cultivators to protect crops, etc., are favourably considered." Will the Hon'ble Minister please consider the desirability of issuing a circular order on this point so that everybody in the province may know the policy of Government and officers may behave accordingly?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Gun licences are issued by a separate department and they are to consider whether the petitioner for a licence is a proper person to be granted licence. Of course, if any petition is submitted direct to me, I will be glad to forward it.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answer (*a*)(*iii*) that there is no cane from this part of the province, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that there is the North Bengal Sugar Mill at Gopalpur and there is another sugar mill at Darsana, both of which are within easy distance of Goalundo subdivision?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Yes, there is a sugar mill at Darsana and there is another at Gopalpur. Some cultivators take their sugarcane to Gopalpur and Darsana.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that in the present year and also in previous years, the sugar mills of Bengal have been suffering from acute shortage of adequate sugarcane supply?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Yes, on account of the failure of sugarcane in North Bengal, mills could not get sufficient sugarcane.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to question (*b*)(*a*), "for setting up sugar mills in the said area," is the Hon'ble Minister aware that in view of the shortage experienced by the already existing sugar mills, the question of setting up of a further number of sugar mills in the areas adjacent to these mills would be uneconomical?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Of course, this matter can rightly be dealt with by the Industries Department. As for the Co-operative Department, I can say that if any private enterprise is made for starting a sugar mill on the co-operative basis, this department will give all sorts of help to it.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that facilities have been given by the Railway Administration to the mills at Darsana and Gopalpur to book up to the station of Khoksha only and not to any station within the district of Faridpur?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I am not aware of it.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he considers it desirable to move the Railway Administration so that equal facilities may be given by the administration for the district of Faridpur?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Of course if I receive any application on behalf of the public or the growers of sugarcane to the effect that facilities are not given to them by the Railway Department, I shall certainly take necessary steps to move the department.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state why he does not think it desirable to have some co-ordination between his department and the gun-licence issuing department so that guns may be issued in the interest of cultivators?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I do not think any co-ordination is necessary for that. If any petition is submitted to the proper authorities, they will consider the matter and there is no reason to apprehend that they will reject the petition.

Appointment of Co-operative Inspectors on Competitive Examination.

***19. Dr. SANAULLAH:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Co-operative Credit and Rural Indebtedness Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact—

(*i*) that some applicants having the required qualification for the post of Co-operative Inspectorship applied with Treasury Chalans of Rs.5;

(*ii*) that they were not selected for the open competitive examination held on the 24th August, 1942; and

(*iii*) that some other applicants of the same qualifications were selected for the same examination without any interview?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the method and principle on which the selection of candidates to sit for the competitive examination was made?

MINISTER in charge of the CO-OPERATIVE CREDIT and RURAL INDEBTEDNESS DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Hashem Ali Khan): (*a*) (*i*) Yes.

(*ii*) and (*iii*) Candidates with inferior qualifications were rejected.

(*b*) *Vide* answer to (*a*) (*ii*) and (*iii*) above.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is meant by "inferior qualifications"?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Two candidates having the same educational qualifications may not be considered equally fit for a post. Respectability of a candidate, his tendency for sports and his practical knowledge or experience in the co-operative movement—all these are also to be considered along with educational qualifications.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: My question is—inferior to whom and to what?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Supposing 500 petitions were filed and out of that the appointing authority considered each and every individual case and selected certain persons he thought fit having rather superior qualifications than the others.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what are the minimum qualifications prescribed for these appointments?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: For Inspectors—graduates, Auditors—under-graduates, and Assistant Auditors—Matric.

Mr. SHAHEDALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state who is to judge whether a qualification is inferior or superior?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: It is the appointing authority—in this case the Registrar of Co-operative Societies.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Are we to understand that by "inferior qualifications" the Hon'ble Minister means not educational qualifications but other kinds of qualifications?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Along with educational qualifications other factors are also to be considered.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: If the educational qualifications are the same in the case of two candidates, how is it going to be judged whether qualifications are superior or inferior? If, as the Hon'ble Minister has just referred, other kinds of qualifications are taken into consideration, without any interview being granted, how does the appointing authority discriminate between two candidates?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I think, Sir, I have already explained that.

Mr. ABDUL WAHAB KHAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if respectability of birth counts in favour of the candidate when other qualifications are equal?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Yes.

Mr. ABDUL WAHAB KHAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether other qualifications being equal, respectability of birth would determine the superiority of qualifications?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: No.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the same kind of consideration for loyalty to British Crown for seven generations as mentioned by the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department was taken into account?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That question does not arise.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the number of candidates who were found to be qualified to sit for the competitive examination for the posts of Co-operative Inspectors?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Without notice I can't say.

Dinajpur Central Co-operative Bank.

*20. **Mr. HAFIZUDDIN CHOUDHURI:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Co-operative Credit and Rural Indebtedness Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact—

(*i*) that there has been great demand for short-term loans in the Thakurgaon subdivision due to economic distress; and

(*ii*) that the Provincial Co-operative Bank has refused advancing loan to some of the Co-operative Central Banks of the Dinajpur district?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*ii*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason thereof?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: (*a*) (*i*) There has been some demand.

(*ii*) Yes.

(*b*) Short-term loan is no longer being distributed through the Bengal Provincial Co-operative Bank.

I may add that this was so last year. This year it has been distributed through the Co-operative Central Banks.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the period of a short-term loan?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: One year.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the short-term loans that were distributed through the Bengal Provincial Co-operative Bank were of immense benefit to the agriculturists?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Oh yes. They were of immense benefit.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state through which authority or agency short-term loans were distributed when the Provincial Government was not distributing these loans?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: These loans were distributed through central banks.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether discontinuation of short-term loans is a complete change of policy, or will he be pleased to explain the reason why this has been discontinued?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: This was discontinued for a year because the Provincial Co-operative Bank failed to pay the money already collected out of crop loan to the Government. In spite of repeated demand, they did not pay and Government

therefore did not think it worth while to advance further money to them. Now the provincial bank have refunded the major portion of the money and promised to pay the balance.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what are the outstanding balances which the bank has been unable to collect.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Without notice I cannot say that.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: I give notice.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware of the fact that it takes more than a month to have short-term loans from the central bank and also from the provincial bank, because the central bank have to go through the Assistant Registrars, and does he consider the desirability of devising means by which the time may be shortened?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Of course I am trying and have already issued orders that short-term loans should be advanced as early as possible without causing unnecessary delay. I think this year it will be done.

Mr. HAFIZUDDIN CHOUDHURI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what amount has been advanced to the central banks of Dinajpur to meet the demand?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Without notice I cannot say that.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(answers to which were laid on the table)

Relief measures in Dacca after the last riot.

7. Mr. SAHABE ALUM: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing—

(*i*) the amount of money given as relief in the district of Dacca after the last riot;

(*ii*) the amount that has been given to (1) Muslims and (2) Hindus;

(*iii*) the amount distributed in Raipura in the district of Dacca after the last riot; and

(*iv*) the amount that has been given to (1) Hindus and (2) Muslims?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any amount has been given as relief for Dacca town?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: (*a*) (*i*), (*iii*) and (*b*) A statement is laid on the Table.

(*a*) (*ii*) and (*iv*) Separate figures showing the grants distributed among Muslims and Hindus are not available.

Statement referred to in reply to unstarred question No. 7.

Area and year.	Gratuitous relief.	Agricultural loans.	Loans to shopkeepers and traders for re-starting their business.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5
	Rs. a. p.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs. a. p.
Dacca district—				
1941-42 ..	1,62,710 3 6	1,39,500	41,314	3,43,524 3 6
1942-43 ..	1,35,000 0 0	1,68,369	97,575	4,00,944 0 0
Raipura areas—				
1941-42 .	1,43,750 15 6	1,39,500	41,314	3,24,564 15 6
1942-43 ..	1,35,000 0 0	1,68,369	97,575	4,00,944 0 0
Dacca town—				
1941-42 ..	18,959 4 0	Nil	Nil	18,959 4 0
1942-43 ..	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the amounts were distributed on a planned scheme or they were paid without any policy?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: This was in pursuance of a scheme and of a policy.

Landlord's fees under the Bengal Tenancy Amendment Act, 1938.

8. Maulvi AZHAR ALI: (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department aware—

(*i*) that by the amended Bengal Tenancy Act of 1928 payment of landlord's fees was compulsory;

(*ii*) that this was abolished by the amendment of 1938;

(*iii*) that no provision was made for purchases made before 1928; and

(*iv*) that a confusion has arisen by the amended Bengal Tenancy Act of 1938, regarding recognition and mutation of purchasers of holdings in zemindar's sheresta?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*iv*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what measures, if any, do the Government intend taking to do away with the said confusion to help the tenants, zemindars as well as court and save any further complication and litigation?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: (*a*) (*i*) to (*iii*) Yes.

(*iv*) No.

(*b*) Does not arise.

(Mr. Deputy Speaker asked Unstarred Question No. 2 to be called.)

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: What about Unstarred Question No. 1, Sir? When will it be taken up?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That question will be taken up later on after *this list is exhausted.*

Re-excavation of Dhurung Khal in police-station Fatikchari, Chittagong.

2. Dr. SANAULLAH: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Communications and Works (Irrigation) Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether the re-excavation work of the Dhurung Khal in police-station Fatikchari in the district of Chittagong was suddenly stopped; and

(*ii*) whether any measures have been taken by the Contractors or the Department to prevent the silting up of the portion already excavated during the rainy season?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) when do the Government propose to take up the unfinished work; and

(*ii*) whether those measures have proved successful?

MINISTER in charge of the COMMUNICATIONS and WORKS DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmed): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) (*i*) As soon as normal time returns.

(*ii*) Yes.

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how much was estimated for the re-excavation of the Dhurung Khal?

The Hon'ble Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: I cannot give that information just now.

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how much has been spent for the same scheme and what amount of work has been completed?

The Hon'ble Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: As regards question (*a*)(*i*) the work was stopped, but, so far as (*a*)(*ii*) is concerned, namely, "whether any measures have been taken by the contractors or the department to prevent the silting up of the portion already excavated during the rainy season," a *band* has been erected.

Excavation of Salikha (Narad) near Nator town.

3. Kazi ABUL MASUD: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Communications and Works Department be pleased to state whether an irrigation scheme for excavation of Salikha (Narad) nearabout Nator town was started by the Government some 2 years back?

(*b*) Is it a fact that the work has not yet been completed?

(*c*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons for the delay in the completion of the work?

The Hon'ble Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: (*a*) The work was undertaken in January, 1941.

(*b*) Yes.

(*c*) The slow progress of the scheme is due to the emergent condition created by the War, on account of which labour could not be procured except at exorbitantly high rates.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: With reference to answer (*c*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the rate which he considered exorbitantly high?

The Hon'ble Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: At first one contractor was employed; he could not proceed and so he was chucked out——

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: No, no; I did not mean that. The Hon'ble Minister said that labour could not be procured except at exorbitantly high rates. I want to know what were these rates which he considered to be exorbitantly high.

The Hon'ble Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: I cannot say that offhand.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if we are to assume that the leader of the Krishak Proja Party grudges the payment of high labour charges? (Laughter.)

The Hon'ble Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: Zemindars will consider that.

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: Is it a fact that the major part of the work has been completed?

The Hon'ble Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: No, not the major part.

Kazi ABUL MASUD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the amount which has been sanctioned by Government?

The Hon'ble Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: I cannot say that offhand.

Kazi ABUL MASUD: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware of the fact that the Rajshahi District Board has sanctioned a sum of Rs. 12,000 for the scheme and it has already spent Rs. 8,000?

The Hon'ble Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: I did not know that this question would be taken up today. I shall give a reply tomorrow.

(Question No. 3, unstarred, was held over.)

Assembly Bye-election of Nator.

4. Kazi ABUL MASUD: (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department aware that the Subdivisional Officer, Nator, the Special Officer, Nator North Circle, Special Officer, South Circle, Sub-Inspector of Police, Singra, and Sub-Inspector of Police, Lalpur, canvassed for a Progressive Party candidate during the last Assembly bye-election of Nator?

(b) If the answer to (a) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what action the Government have taken in the matter?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) The election was not contested on behalf of the Progressive Coalition Party. I have no reason to believe that the officers mentioned canvassed on behalf of any candidate.

(*b*) Does not arise.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the Leader of the Progressive Coalition Party went to Natore just before the election and canvassed for the candidate Mr. Nowajeshuddin Chaudhury?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Yes, Sir, he went, but not for canvassing.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the Leader of the Coalition Party addressed a meeting in Natore in favour of Mr. Nowajeshuddin Chaudhury?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I addressed three meetings.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Is it a fact that the Leader of the Progressive Coalition Party utilised the Government microphone when addressing those meetings?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: It is the policy of the Government, and I utilised the microphone of the Publicity Department?

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Hon'ble Minister for Communications and Works also went to Nator and canvassed there?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am not aware.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Will the Hon'ble Chief Minister be pleased to state whether it is not a fact that another of his colleagues, the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Hashem Ali Khan, also went to Nator for the purpose of canvassing for the said candidate?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: He has been to so many places during the last one year that it is difficult for me to remember.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Is it a fact that three of them went at one time to Nator?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I was there one day earlier and the other two Hon'ble Ministers went there after I had come away.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he did not utilise the microphone of the Publicity Department of the Government of Bengal for the purpose of canvassing against the Muslim League candidate?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: As the honourable member knows the practice is for Ministers to use not only the microphone of the Publicity Department but also those of district boards and municipalities.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: We want an answer, yes or no. Did he or did he not utilise the microphone of the Publicity Department, bullocks and bulls of the Publicity Department? Is it or it is not a fact that the officers and subordinates of the Publicity Department were carrying on canvassing in favour of Mr. Nowajeshuddin Chaudhury?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I have already answered that question, and my answer should be taken in full.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: What was the answer? Does the Hon'ble Minister after all this pretend to state before the House that the candidate for whom he was canvassing was not the candidate set up by the Progressive Coalition Party?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is no question.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Has the Hon'ble Minister received representations against the Subdivisional Officer of Nator, the Special Officer, Nator North Circle, the Special Officer, South Circle, the Sub-Inspector of Police, Singra, and the Sub-Inspector of Police, Lalpur, for canvassing on behalf of Mr. Nowajeshuddin Chaudhury?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The honourable member is aware that when the Hon'ble Ministers are on tour all the officers do attend, but in this case they did not attend for canvassing.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: What I asked was whether the Hon'ble Minister had received representations against the conduct of these officers?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: No, Sir.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the Krishak Proja Party is a group within the Progressive Coalition Party?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: It does not arise out of the question.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That question does not arise.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the Krishak Proja Party nominated a candidate for this election?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That question does not arise.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to enlighten the House why he has not taken any step with regard to the representations made by myself to Government and to the Hon'ble Chief

Minister against the conduct of the Subdivisional Officer of Natore because he canvassed for Mr. Nowajeshuddin Chaudhury and threatened the voters there, who did not vote for him, with dire consequences?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Since the question has been put, I feel I am bound to answer it. Mr. Suhrawardy who has been putting all these questions and Sir Nazimuddin, the Leader of the Opposition, have, I understand, represented certain matters directly to His Excellency the Governor and very recently they have been to Writers' Buildings and seen the Chief Secretary about certain allegations. They have not had even the common courtesy to let me know what allegations they have to make against one of our officers. I, therefore, decline to take any action. If, however, they can make out any case against anybody, I give this assurance that an enquiry will be made and steps taken to bring that officer to book.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Will the Hon'ble Minister give us an assurance?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Yes.

Family allowance of certain security prisoners.

5. Mr. JNANENDRA CHANDRA MAJUMDAR: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Jails) Department be pleased to state whether the Government have received petitions from security prisoners Babus Sailendra Nath Bose, Subodh Chandra Das, Brajendra Chandra Chakravarti and Sudhangshu Mohan Chowdhury for the grant of family allowances?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the action that has been taken on those petitions?

(*c*) Is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of granting family allowances to the abovementioned security prisoners?

(*d*) If the answer to (*c*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons thereof?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) The petitions are under my consideration.

(*c*) and (*d*) I am awaiting the results of the enquiry already undertaken to ascertain the financial conditions of the respective families.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when the petitions in question were received from the security prisoners?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: They were received on different dates. The earliest was in September last.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when he expects to take a decision on those petitions?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Some of these petitions have been disposed of, but I do not know if the orders of the Government have been communicated. I am trying to expedite the matter as much as possible.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is aware that the dependants of some of these security prisoners are becoming destitute owing to the delayed action of Government?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am not aware, but if that is the case I shall request the honourable member to give me some specific statements so that I may take action.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Government will consider the desirability of setting up a committee of this House to help the Government in expediting action on petitions submitted by security prisoners?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That is a matter of policy on which I shall say nothing.

Distress in Nator subdivision owing to drought.

6. Kazi ABUL MASUD: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that there has been a failure of crops this season in the Nator subdivision of the Rajshahi district?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps, if any, Government propose to take or have already taken in the matter?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any agricultural loan, or gratuitous relief, have been given to the cultivators?

MINISTER in charge of the REVENUE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee). (*a*) The jute and aus paddy crops suffered this year due to scanty rainfall in time but the *aman* paddy crop which is the mainstay of the subdivision is promising everywhere. There is also the sugarcane crop which will be marketed later, and its prospects are fair.

(*b*) and (*c*) Do not arise.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state to the House what steps he took to relieve the distress in Nator between the cutting of *aus* crop and before the *aman* crop was cut?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: So far as I am aware, no representation has come to this department, and if a representation comes adequate steps will be taken.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: The time is past. Between the last *aus* crop and the last *aman* crop, were any steps taken by the Revenue Department to relieve the distress of the people of Nator?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: So far as I am aware, no steps have been taken, but I shall look into the matter.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to inform us if the non-granting of any relief was in pursuance of the threat given by the Hon'ble Chief Minister that he would not grant any relief to Nator unless the Muslim voters returned his candidate?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I most emphatically repudiate the suggestion made by the honourable member.

Supplementaries to Unstarred Question No. 1.

1. Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: In answer (*b*) and (*c*), the following words occur:—"A survey of the Chandana system has recently been completed, but the data thus collected are not considered sufficient to determine and locate the spill openings required in the road and railway embankments for a permanent improvement of the river." Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what are the names of the spill openings contemplated in the road and railway embankments which will necessitate a further enquiry?

The Hon'ble Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: I have not got the papers today. I shall give the answer tomorrow.

(Further supplementaries to the question were held over.)

Adjournment motions.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have received notice of the following adjournment motion of Mr. Suhrawardy, namely, that the business of this Assembly do now adjourn for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the serious situation arising out of the failure of Government to tackle satisfactorily the problem of food and other essential commodities of life and to deal with black market and hoarding and profiteering. I hold that this motion is in order but before I ascertain whether this motion has the leave of the House to be moved, I should like to hear the views of the Hon'ble the Chief Minister.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: As regards the debate on the question of food-supply we have received notices of this adjournment motion and also of a special motion and Government have decided to allot two special days for the discussion on the special motion. I submit that when the House is getting two days for debate on food-supply, there is no need to move this adjournment motion at this stage, and I hope the mover of this adjournment motion will be pleased not to press his motion.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: In view of the statement just made that the Government have been good enough to allot two days for the special motion on food-supply, we do not press our adjournment motion.

But I have another adjournment motion, Sir,——

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That, Mr. Suhrawardy, I propose to take up next day and I waive the urgency of the motion for the present. Dr. Sanyal.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: But, Sir, we have got seven or eight adjournment motions to bring forward before this House. You realise the unfortunate position that no Monsoon session was held and the last session was terminated abruptly. And in spite of the promise of Government to hold a session either in November or December or January, the session is now being held in February. We have had no opportunity of ventilating our grievances, and I submit under these circumstances you would be considerate to the Opposition in the matter of these adjournment motions and allow us to move these very important motions one by one.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Suhrawardy, you know that I have waived the urgency of one or two motions of your party and I have given my consent to them to be moved in this House if leave is given to move them. But if you press for all the adjournment motions to be moved, then it would be impossible for me to carry on the normal business of the House. There are more than a dozen adjournment motions and supposing they are admissible under the rules, it would take a long time to dispose of them. This would hamper the normal work of the Assembly to such an extent that it would be impossible to finish the regular business of the House in time. For that reason I have after consultation with the Leader of the Opposition come to this decision in which Sir Nazimuddin has also concurred that I should stick to one or two very important adjournment motions. I have therefore given my consent to the adjournment motion regarding the supersession of the district boards of Bengal and I have also waived the urgency of the case.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: I feel deeply grateful to you, Sir, for the consideration you have given to our adjournment motions, but at the same time if these motions are in order which could not be brought forward earlier it is up to you, Sir, that you should consider it to be the right and the privilege of the members of this House to allow these adjournment motions. The motions may be considerable in number, but they raise matters of very grave importance with regard to the constitutional position as well as the future administration of the province. The whole session except for the Budget is going to be a farce.

Mr. A. F. STARK: As I understand the position, the previous ruling on this question by the late Speaker, Sir Muhammad Azizul Haque, was that if you receive notices of twelve adjournment motions for one day and you admit one of them the rest lapse for the simple reason that you cannot carry forward adjournment motions from day to day. Otherwise, you cannot carry on the normal business of the House. That, I think, was the attitude of the last Speaker. Moreover we do not want to block the right of the Opposition to move adjournment motions on important questions when there will be plenty of opportunity to discuss these matters by cut motions during the debate on the Budget Demands.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: *Adjournment motions will not, however, lapse if the urgency of the matter is waived. Of course, these matters can* otherwise be very well discussed on the floor of the House by either cut motions or by short-notice questions and I can arrange that the answers to such questions should be available as quickly as possible. Moreover, in the course of the Budget session, adjournment motions should be discouraged as far as possible for the simple reason that such matters can very well be discussed by means of cut motions in the Budget. In spite of the fact that you will get ample opportunities to discuss the matters contained in the adjournment motions by resolutions or questions or cut motions I have given my consent to one or two motions and I would advise the Opposition to confine themselves to these one or two motions. In that view I would advise you not to press for all the motions and thus force me to give a ruling on this question. My difficulty is that if I have to give my consent to all these adjournment motions I will not be able to carry on the regular business of the House from day to day. Ordinarily, the notices are to lapse if the motions are not moved on the first day but I have waived the urgency of one or two motions and thus given you the opportunity to move one or two adjournment motions later on. I hope you will not press me to give a ruling.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: May I be——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I beg to move——

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: You must yield, Dr. Sanyal, when another gentleman is on his legs to reply to the statement of the Deputy Speaker.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: It is not a question of yielding. I have yielded once or twice before. When an adjournment of great importance is going to be shut out by interruptions, I cannot yield——

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: On a point of order, Sir. I wanted to move an adjournment motion on the constitutional situation that has been created due to the arbitrary interference of the head of the administration with ministerial responsibility as disclosed by the statement of Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee the other day. You have refused to give your consent and I ask why this consent has been refused.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is not a point or order. I shall be very glad if you will come and discuss this matter in my chamber after to-day's sitting or to-morrow.

(At this stage the House was adjourned for fifteen minutes.)

(After adjournment.)

Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: Sir, before Dr. Sanyal speaks may I say one word? Sir, you were pleased to adjourn the meeting for *Asar* prayer but *Asar* is not yet up.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will ascertain from Moulana and from tomorrow I will observe the exact time.

Maulvi ABUL HASHIM: On a point of order, Sir. Are we to understand that even though the prayer time has not reached yet, for to-day we are to say our *Asar* prayers earlier than usual?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: All that I can do is that there will be no division before 5-30

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, with all the earnestness that I can command I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance and of recent occurrence, namely, the repressions carried out in the Contai and Tamluk subdivisions of Midnapore district including the arrest of innocent persons, destruction of property, burning of houses and assaults on men and women

Sir, Midnapore has been drawing considerable public attention during the last few months and has already been very much in the minds of members of this House This has been due to two reasons—one the great havoc created by the cyclone and typhoon on the 16th and 17th of October last, and the consequent sufferings of the people, and the other and no less important is the barbarity practised there by the local agents of the Government, the guardians of law and order The object of the present motion is primarily to draw the attention of this House and of Government to the second matter and to show how effective relief to the sufferers is being thwarted by a calculated policy of ruthless repression pursued by Government. Sir, in doing so I would like to invite your attention to the recent statement made by Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee explaining why he tendered his resignation of the office of the Finance Minister. I cannot improve upon the inimitable language with which he has given expression to the anguish of his heart. Sir, he stated that "the local officers were themselves reported to have broken the basic canons of civilized administration and carried on a relentless campaign of repression irrespective of the guilt of the people concerned, and shooting of innocent people, looting and destruction of property, instigating one community against the other, attacks on women were amongst the charges that reached us from various independent sources" Detailed information was handed over to us including lists of houses that were raided and burnt by or under the direction of the police and the military, and further, that "the callousness of some of the officials was unparalleled in the annals of civilized administration" "The horrors of oppression under the British rule that Bengal and India witnessed during the last five months compare very favourably with the reports that British propagandists circulate about Axis tortures in lands under their occupation."

Sir, I would not like to use any further the English language to embellish the charges that Dr. Mookerjee has levelled Our charges are that innocent persons have been arrested, their movements from place to place have been restricted without sufficient reason, that the houses of poor villagers have been burnt, that properties and houses were looted indiscriminately, that men and women have been assaulted even when they were waiting for doles, and last but not the least, that our motherhood has been outraged and there has been even mass outrage in certain parts of Midnapore. It is really

heart-rending to give an account of all these occurrences, and I would merely confine myself to drawing the attention of this House to a few typical cases and leave other members who follow me to fill in the details.

Sir, in doing so, I take the fullest responsibility for what I state, because I am confident that if a proper and impartial enquiry is instituted I will be in a position to bring home all these charges.

To start with, I take up the restrictions on movements of persons. It is common knowledge that no one was for a long time permitted to go to and from Contai without a permit from the Subdivisional Officer. The plea was that there was restriction imposed on account of the necessary restriction of buses plying between Contai and the railway station. More so, Sir, there was restriction imposed on even members of this House representing the constituency, who were not allowed to go to their own places even for the purpose of rendering relief. Sir, it is also common knowledge that members of well-known organisations primarily concerned with humanitarian activities were not permitted to go there even after the cyclone and they were not allowed, even when they were permitted to go there, to bring in reports of the happenings and make those reports available for the public.

The second charge is that relating to the arrest of innocent men. I will only recount one instance and leave it to the House to judge how the administration is functioning in this respect. During the last great havoc created by Nature, one unfortunate gentleman who had been an Advocate of Calcutta and who was the President of union board No. 10, police-station Ramnagar, Mr. Trailakya Prodhan lost 21 members of his family including his only son. A few days before that his wife died and he, in order to find some solace for his aggrieved heart, gave himself up entirely to the service of suffering humanity in the locality, and he was doing yeoman's service in the cause of relief. This was noted and recorded by high Government officials also. Yet, Sir, when he was actually engaged in giving relief he was arrested on the 23rd November from the Hindu Mahasabha Camp at Pichhabani Relief Centre under sections 56 and 30 of the Defence of India Rules and he was arrested in the presence of the Special Officer who was helping him in the matter of distribution of relief. Sir, I would not go into further details. There have been numerous cases of arrest of such innocent persons and subsequently Government themselves found out their mistakes and the people were let off. That proves how innocent persons have been arrested indiscriminately.

Sir, one other gentleman, namely, Sj. Bibhuti Bhusan Roy Choudhury, Zemindar of Balya-Govindapur and President of Pataspur Hindu Mahasabha Relief Centre, had to surrender to the Subdivisional Officer, Contai, as he had been harassed unnecessarily by the police for a long time. He never had anything to do with the Congress or with any movement of a subversive character and yet, Sir, that was his fate. And what was the degree of callousness of officials of that place that we have noticed? There is a statement of Babu Sashibhusan Mal of village Durgapur, police-station

Contai, an old man of 63, whose account I would just draw your attention to to find out if there is anybody left here so cruel-hearted as not to be moved by it. This gentleman says:—

"I am sixty-three years old. My house is one mile to the south of Contai town. On 16th October, 1942, Friday, the day of the cyclone, my house was completely inundated by flood. Myself, my wife, my servant, my nephew in all fifty members tried to save our lives by sitting on two *chalas*. We sat there on the floating *chalas* from 2 p.m. of Friday to early morning of Saturday. On our cowshed a mango tree fell uprooted. One *chala* by chance was obstructed by the mango tree. We were sitting on that *chala*. Subsequently when I measured the height of the *chala* from the earth I found that it stood at a height of 11 cubits from the ground. On Saturday in the evening we all members somehow reached near the Contai Court by a boat which was kept sunk by a neighbour. On reaching Contai I enquired of my relatives. There I met Sj. Ajit Maiti and his brother Digbijoy Maiti, both sons of Rai Bahadur Abanti Maiti, Pleader of Contai. They informed me that they received a definite information that my two sons-in-law named Bankim Behari Jana and Lakshmi Narain Dinda and my youngest daughter Nalina Sundari, wife of Lakshmi Narain and his little child and my grand-daughter Ashru Kana Debi, daughter of Bankim Behari Jana and her husband Amulya Ratan Maiti, all belonging to the village Kumarpur, union board No. 15, police-station Contai, were seen by some reliable persons to be floating for a long time on the flood water. Village Kumarpur is also adjacent to Contai town. When I was starting with the boat in search of close relatives Dwarka Babu came there and told me that he cannot permit the boat to be used by me as this is the order of the Subdivisional Officer, Contai. I told him that I am in greatest difficulty. I promised to return the boat when the Subdivisional Officer called for the same. Dwarka would not agree. Then I along with one Jiban Maicap (local man) went upstairs and saw the Subdivisional Officer and fervently requested him to allow us to use the boat to save my relatives. Jiban Maicap fell on the feet of the Subdivisional Officer and began to cry aloud. Dwarka Babu was also moved by our wailings and he said to the Subdivisional Officer the boat (*nauka*) which carries fifty maunds weight is wanted by us at 8 a.m. next morning. We may release the boat to Sashi Bhusan Mal now. But the Subdivisional Officer did not agree. Next day at 12 a.m. the boat was sent by the Subdivisional Officer to Junput area. Meanwhile Bankim Behari Jana, Lakshmi Narain Dinda, Nalina Sundari, her son, Ashru Kana Debi, Amulya Ratan Maiti all died as no assistance could be rendered to them though they were fighting with the surging waves and they expected a boat to come to rescue them."

There is another instance of the callousness of officers. On an enquiry made by the Subdivisional Officer himself one military officer wrote back. When the Subdivisional Officer wanted an explanation as to why a particular person who was badly in need of doles and was waiting for the same was assaulted the military officer, Lt. Sutherland wrote: "I have not yet had my instruction to fire on crowds, five constituting a crowd, so the man was lucky, he got off so lightly." He was only "cudgelled".

Coming now to the third charge that Government or agents of Government allowed or could not prevent looting of property and burning of houses, I would invite your attention to the statement of Babu Bishnuhari Dutt, M.Sc., B.T., teacher, Scottish Church Collegiate School and part-time lecturer, Scottish Church College. In his statement he described how on two occasions, namely, 13th October and 2nd November, 1942, his house was looted, although he had no connection and none of his family had any connection with the Congress or any subversive movement at all. Among the things looted, it is surprising that he had a few Defence Savings Certificates which were also looted. That shows how this gentleman who had tried to save something for helping the war cause was also not spared.

I have also statements from two other gentlemen—one Sj. Kedar Nath Maiti of village Mahabisru. He was an ex-Manager of the Jaipur Crown Estate, Bogra, and he gives a long account of how his house was looted and property taken away, his women dishonoured and he was left with no other alternative than to go to the Subdivisional Officer and complain. The Subdivisional Officer promised to enquire but even now nothing has happened. The second statement is that of Kalipada Maiti, homœopathic practitioner of village Sabitrichak. He also gives a full account of how his house was looted and property taken away.

With regard to the burning of houses, I need not go into details, as some other members will follow me up. I will only draw your attention to the fact that even after the cyclone houses were seen burning. Some Hon'ble Ministers who went and visited the places actually found with their own eyes that the houses were still burning, for which the responsibility was that of the police and the military and of nobody else. In Tamluk subdivision no less than 117 houses have been reported to have been burnt; in Contai subdivision more than 1,000 houses, to be exact 1,080, were found burnt up to the end of December. I do not possess the figures for what happened after that.

But, Sir, what has agitated us most is the assault and outrage on the womenfolk. Outrage and rape on women has been allowed indiscriminately for a pretty long time and it has culminated in wide mass outrages on two villages—one in Chandipur in Tamluk and the other in Pataspur police-station on two days. I have got with me signed statements with the names and finger prints of all the ladies concerned, and if any honourable member or the Minister concerned is in doubt I can make a present of them to him also. For want of time I am only reading out the introductory observations to the statements:—

In this statement the villagers say that এতদিন পল্টনসহ পুলিস ভলাণ্টিয়ার ধরিবার জন্য মধ্যে মধ্যে আমাদের গ্রামসমূহে প্রবেশ করিয়া নিরীহ অধিবাসীদিগকে ভীষণভাবে প্রহার করিয়াছে। অনেকের অর্থ, অলঙ্কারাদি আত্মসাৎ করিয়াছে এবং কাহারও কাহারও বন্যাপ্লাবনাবশিষ্ট আবশ্যকীয় দ্রব্য এমন কি খাদ্যাদিও নষ্ট করিয়া দিয়াছে। তাহারা এক্ষণে আমাদের মাতৃজাতির প্রাণাপেক্ষা প্রিয়তর সতীত্বরত্নে হস্তক্ষেপ করিয়া দুর্ভীক্ষপীড়িত, অনশনক্লিষ্ট অত্যাচারিত অধিবাসীদের অন্তরে তুষানল জ্বালাইয়া দিয়াছে।

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, Order. Your time is up.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir let me conclude. Our first demand is that Government should stop all these barbarities and save the honour of men and women. Our second demand is that they should hold an independent and impartial enquiry and punish the offenders adequately. Sir, it is not the cry of one in the Opposition merely. It is the cry of oppressed Midnapore emanating from the anguishes of outraged motherhood, the call in the name of humanity, the call in the name of all that we hold sacred and dear.

Sir, I submit that the Hon'ble Minister will take proper note of this and give us an adequate remedy, and will at least hold out sufficient hope that he and his Cabinet will make sincere attempts to remedy the present situation.

Babu ASHUTOSH LAHIRI: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Midnapore has been in the forefront of the public eye during the last few months. The typhoon that passed over it on the 16th of October, 1942, and severely affected the subdivisions of Contai and Tamluk, has evoked sympathy from all over India and even outside. Enquiries into the situation created by the cyclone not only revealed the sufferings of the people due to this natural calamity but also brought out the nature and effect of the repressive policy pursued by the agents of Government since August last on the plea of putting down the political movement in the district. Consequent on the declaration of Civil Disobedience by the All-India Congress Committee on the 8th August and the steps taken by Government to meet it, namely, banning of the Congress organisations and promulgation of rigorous ordinances, political situation in India underwent a definite change. Midnapore was affected by the upheaval like other parts of the country. The district had been in the past the foremost in all political movements and bore the brunt of repression more than once. What the people and Government did on this occasion was kept beyond the public eye with the help of orders and directions completely gagging the press. But the cyclone focussed the entire public attention of India on the district and exposed the tyranny it has suffered. Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee resigned from the Ministry and Midnapore was one of the main issues which compelled him to take this step. In his resignation letter to the Governor, which was subsequently banned, he severely criticised the executive, not sparing His Excellency the Governor himself, for pursuing an inhuman policy of repression even after the people had been struck down by a severe natural calamity. For a time Government seemed to bow down under the weight of Dr. Mookerjee's charges but ultimately it made an attempt, though feeble, to meet them and set up a defence as best as it could. The Government communiqué on Midnapore was issued on December 6th and in it Government not only denied the charges of oppression on the people but attempted to shift the onus on the people themselves. The communiqué states:—

"Their intention in which for some time they had at least partially succeded, was to isolate Contai and Tamluk subdivisions and to eliminate completely all signs of ordered Government and the administration,

established by law. To that end they had set up and they are still unfortunately maintaining in areas where authority has not yet been completely restored a régime of intimidation, persecution and extortion directed against the representatives of Government and those amongst the inhabitants who are, or are suspected to be, in favour of the maintenance of law and order. When the cyclone hit Midnapore they had already succeeded in interrupting road and telegraphic communications and in destroying a number of police-stations, post offices, other Government buildings and water-borne craft and ferries. Officers administering departments of Government within the locality had been detained or evicted and in some cases cruelly beaten. .... Subversive elements had contrived to establish as the machinery of their ascendancy, centres of administration with a parody of all the paraphernalia of ordered Government—parallel district organisations, so-called courts and jails, centres for the training of 'volunteers' and a number of so-called thanas."

These are on the whole the allegations of Government against the people of the areas affected by cyclone It must be admitted that it requires an impartial enquiry to ascertain the truth or otherwise of these allegations and the demand for such an enquiry Government has repeatedly rejected Even if what Government states is all true, the question remains as to whether it justifies the measures and methods of repression pursued by Government on the plea of putting down these disturbances, specially even after the fateful cyclone of October 16th. It is difficult to collect all the instances of oppression by the agents of Government in these areas. The police and the military have set up a fence around certain areas into which it is not easy to get access. We have, however, collected some of the instances from authentic sources. They are all verified by persons who have had firsthand experience of the situation and are directly in contact with the people. In pursuing this policy Government agents have gone so far as to deny and hamper relief to the affected people. They have indulged directly and indirectly in loot, assault, burning of houses, destruction of properties and even outrage on women. Thus in Midnapore, if the people had violated some laws, the guardians of law and order have themselves broken the laws they were to enforce, including the laws of humanity.

The ravages of the typhoon and cyclone of October 16th will be clearly realised from the obsevations of the Hon'ble Mr. S. K. Basu who, as Mayor of Calcutta, had firsthand knowledge about the Bihar earthquake. He had to admit that it was more appalling and "far more awful than even the earthquake in Bihar as regards human and animal mortality." An area of some 1,200 square miles was more or less affected. Torrential rains preceded the actual tornado, and reached the volume of a cloud-burst on the evening and the night of the 16th October. Earth tremors are also reported to have been felt during this time at certain places. The peak of the storm was attained between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. of the 16th.

During the night, when the violence of the storm was at its height, the sea rose in the form of a tidal wave and swept across the sea-dykes and bunds in gigantic waves which swelled about 16 feet high above the

highest sea-walls, and swept across the villages on the coast line. As a result hundreds of villages were wiped out in one terrible blow over an area of about 150 square miles. Thousands of cottages had already collapsed before the coming of the tidal wave, the roofs and the earthen walls being torn and demolished by the tornado, and people were trying to rescue those who had been buried under the ruins, when the whole area was overwhelmed by sea-water. In the areas reached by this wave, the destruction was almost complete. The only survivors were those who were carried along alive and floating on the wave and managed to secure foothold on some high land or to catch hold of tree trunks and thus dragged themselves to safety. Of the overwhelmed villages hardly any trace is to be found. The sea-dykes and locks were smashed up.

On the higher land, destruction of houses, cottages, cattle sheds, etc., by the force of the storm and the action of the continuous torrential downpour, lashed by the velocity of the wind was extremely high; it has been found that in the coastal belt, i.e., the areas affected both by flood and the cyclone, 99 per cent of the huts collapsed and 98 per cent. live-stock had been washed away. And in the areas which had been affected only by the cyclone, 95 per cent of the huts collapsed and a large percentage of live-stock perished. Hardly a tree remains standing now and 100 per cent. of the crops in the coastal belt had been totally destroyed, while in the less affected areas there had been damage to crop to the extent of 70 per cent. to 80 per cent. Salt water bearing sand and having entered the rivers, canals and waterways through the smashed lockgates and over the sea walls, fields had been flooded and tanks were partially filled with sand and saturated with brine, all fresh water fish being killed.

The death-roll in Contai and Tamluk subdivisions alone is believed to be not less than 40,000. This death-roll is partially due to direct action of of the typhoon, and in many instances due to the survivors perishing through want of any relief being given before several days had elapsed after the occurrence.

The first reaction of Government to this sudden catastrophe was an attempt to suppress the gravity of the disaster and the all-powerful Defence of India Rules were utilised for the purpose. For publishing and commenting upon some of the facts the Bengali daily *Jugantar* was suppressed. An innocent query by the *Ananda Bazar Patrika* with the object of facilitating relief work was objected to. Even appeals for help were withheld from publication. All this was done for alleged military reasons—although highly exaggerated accounts of the havoc were being broadcast from Japanese radio stations. This deliberate withholding of news from the public did greatly hamper relief organisation and was indeed criminal. In spite of attempts of Government, news however slowly began to percolate and deputation of local people narrated the distress of the people to the Revenue Minister and urged him to allow relief organisation to work.

The effect, if not the very object of censoring of news, was to prevent or at least delay relief of the distressed.

The official mind was so much vitiated by the campaign of repression pursued by them during the period preceding the cyclone that they could think of nothing else. Even the Governor in his broadcast could not fail to take note of this attitude. While referring to the deplorable disorders in the very areas where the cyclone had wrought havocs, he said "I must make it clear that Government consider it their duty, are able, and intend to suppress all violence and disorders of this kind." It is now well-known that one officer at least, namely, Subdivisional Officer, Tamluk, received warning from the Alipore Meteorological Observatory that a storm of great intensity was approaching on the morning of the 16th of October, but the public is not yet aware of the action taken on this, beyond filing it.

The conduct, even after the typhoon, was still more shameless. The local officers did not care even to supply full information about the havoc but continued the repression as before. As to relief measures, their conduct is surprising and inexplicable. The Subdivisional Officer, Contai, issued a confidential circular on or about the 23rd of October in which he laid down the policy of rendering relief as determined by the local officers so far, and among other things, drew the particular attention of local officers to the fact that "outside relief (Government or others) is not proposed to be given just now".

The District Magistrate went a step further. He submitted in writing a report to Government that relief, whether organised by Government or by private agency, should be withheld for a month and thereby people taught a permanent lesson. He also acted literally according to this policy. In his presence complaints were received that boats were not made available on that fateful evening or even later to save the lives of people who were perilously resting for a brief while on the roofs of their homes that ultimately collapsed. Several gentlemen it is alleged, begged of this officer to allow a boat found by them to ply for a couple of hours in order to rescue some men, women and children lying near the area concerned. This request was rejected and the men who had used the boat were threatened. Later on, all the people whom these gentlemen wanted to rescue, were washed away, never to be found again.

Any attempt to carry relief was resented and relief workers were molested and turned out. Some of the workers of the Marwari Relief Society, though they produced their credentials, found themselves in jail under the Defence of India Rules.

It was at this stage, when the Ministers were convinced from volume of information received from various independent sources that the situation in Midnapore after the typhoon must have been extremely grave, they decided to visit the areas and three of them, Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee, Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee and the Nawab Bahadur of Dacca, went there on the 29th October, 1942. They found that after the cyclone, curfew orders were continuing even in areas where people offered every co-operation, transport facilities and movements were extremely restricted, and the affected areas were still to be surveyed. Of the surviving milch cows a good many were snatched away from private houses under the Defence of India Rules

by the police and the military for the purpose of feeding the troops. The relief measures adopted by the local officers were utterly inadequate while *bona fide* private relief workers from Calcutta, were arrested and imprisoned under the Defence of India Rules.

The Ministers were told that political agitation was still in progress in some parts of Midnapore. But their actual experience was otherwise and they found from their interview with Midnapore leaders who were in jail and outside that a little tact, foresight and sympathy on the part of local officers could rouse the whole of Midnapore to work wholeheartedly with Government for giving relief.

The officers on the contrary continued their repression unabated and burnt five houses in one village, Babupur in union No. 1 under Sutahata police-station in Tamluk on the very date of typhoon, and carried on a policy of reprisal with the same amount of vigour till as late as the middle of January, 1943.

The Ministers came back after their inspection and made arrangements for publication of news. A Government communique was for the first time published on November 3, 1942, but even then it did not contain much detailed information as to havoc caused and the amount of loss of human lives, though about three weeks had elapsed after the occurrence.

Even after the Ministers came back fully satisfied that many thousands of persons were killed, and a few lacs had been deprived of their homes, possessions and means of livelihood, Government could not formulate a definite policy in regard to Midnapore both in respect of relief measures and political situation. There were alleged to have been sharp differences between His Excellency and the permanent officials on the one hand and the Ministry on the other. Dr. S. P. Mookerjee, Finance Minister, resigned his office on the 16th of November, in utter disgust.

On the 17th November, Sir John Herbert, Governor of Bengal, gave a broadcast talk from the Calcutta Station of All-India Radio. After describing the harrowing details which he saw from his aerial survey a few days ago, he appealed to "every man and woman of goodwill, irrespective of race, politics or religion, to join Government in this good work; and they may rest assured that Government will assist and co-ordinate their charitable efforts in every way". The next evening the Revenue Minister, the Hon'ble Mr. P. N. Banerjee, offered grateful thanks to the people of this province for not being "slow to respond to the call of humanity". Referring to the question of political tension in some parts of the affected area, Mr. Banerjee concluded: "I feel very strongly that in the abnormal situation created by the ravages of nature, all political controversies should be forgotten. I am hoping that one thought, namely, the relief of the distressed and suffering humanity will be the dominant idea in the mind of every lover of humanity, irrespective of differences in politics, irrespective of differences of caste, creed and colour. The task of reconstruction is heavy. The claims of humanity transcend the bounds of political, social or economic difference."

It was thus expected that the policy of the relief operations of the Government in Midnapore would be shaped after what His Excellency the Governor and his Revenue Minister had talked to the people on the radio. But the expectations of the non-official relief organisations were soon belied. While the head of the Bengal Government was outwardly appealing for laying aside all political controversies, the agents of the Government in Midnapore found in the distress of the people a splendid opportunity to wreak vengence on the "rebels". Their record would put to shame any tyrant in the world and compare most favourably with the reports of the Axis oppressions sent to us by Allied news agencies.

(At this stage the member having reached the time limit resumed his seat.)

Mr. P. BANERJI: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the history of repression in Midnapore is not a new history. It is the repetition of the history of 1931 when similar motions were brought before this House and similar incidents of rape, arson, looting, etc., were brought before this House when we protested most vehemently against the excesses committed by the local officials in Midnapore which culminated in the murder of Peddie, Douglas and Burge——

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I would ask you, Mr. Banerji, to confine yourself to the subject-matter now before the House and not refer to past history.

Mr. P. BANERJI: All right, Sir.

I will now refer to the oppressions in Contai and Tamluk subdivisions from August 9th, 1942, to 26th January, 1943. In Pataspur thana, three were shot dead, 9 were wounded by bullets, 65 women were raped and assaulted, 3,309 were arrested, 84 were lodged in jails or released on bail, 11 were convicted, 359 were looted by police, 102 were looted by hooligans incited by police, there was damage by looting to the extent of Rs. 42,148, total damage was valued at Rs. 79,254; the number of householders whose houses were burnt by the military and the police were 104 and the number of persons assaulted by *lathis* were 3,609.

In Ramnagar police-station, 9 were shot dead, 24 were wounded by bullets, 8 women were raped and assaulted, 85 were arrested, 14 were lodged in jail or released on bail, 11 were convicted, 211 persons were looted by the police, 6 persons were looted by the hooligans, Rs. 43,653 worth of property was looted, Rs. 1,95,490 worth of property was damaged by burning, total damage was worth Rs. 2,39,143. The number of householders whose houses were burnt was 313. Number of persons assaulted by *lathis* was 73 and the number of persons appointed as special constables was 50.

In Khedgree police-station, rape and assault on women numbered 12, number of persons lodged in jail was 82, looted by police 66, damage by looting Rs. 15,926, damage by burning Rs. 26,853, total damage Rs. 42,779, householders whose houses have been burnt numbered 20, assaulted by *lathis* 192.

In Egra police-station, shot dead 2, wounded by bullets 1, rape and assault on women 17, arrested 213, in jail *hajat* 82, looted by police 232, looted by hooligans 22, damage by looting Rs. 49,117, damaged by burning Rs. 77,115, total damage Rs. 1,26,232, householders whose houses have been burnt 142, assaulted by *lathis* 317, appointed special constables 15.

In Bhagabanpore police-station, shot dead 16, wounded by bullets 83, rape and assault on women 29, arrested 2,111, looted by police 353, damage by looting Rs. 36,472, damage by burning Rs. 31,785, total damage Rs. 68,257, householders whose houses have been burnt 49, wounded by *lathis* 755, special constables 398.

In Contai police-station, shot dead 7, wounded by bullets 16, rape and assault on women 6, arrested 1,537, in jail *hajat* or released on bail 89, looted by police 131, looted by hooligans at the instance of the police 54, householders whose houses have been burnt 452, wounded by *lathis* 310.

Whenever a house is raided police illegally detains the householders sometimes from morning till late at night, assaults them all and in many cases by oral orders people are compelled to be present in thanas once every day or once in three days and sometimes once in seven days. The detained men are abused filthily and assaulted mercilessly in thana *hajat* and in all places of detention.

Now, Sir, Mr. Lahiri has given a detailed account of how relief measures have been obstructed. I will give some cases of oppression and illustrate how repression is being carried on there.

Sir, those cases that have been mentioned are nothing as compared with the acts of oppression and repression committed by Government officers and the military. Harrowing tales of loot and destruction of properties of the civil population and outrage on women in various villages were reaching the various relief centres. Sometimes they carried on depredation on individual families while on other occasions, these military people surrounded the entire village, forcibly removed menfolk under arrest and detained them, while some of them entered into the houses of these people, committed outrage on women, on a mass scale, destroyed the belongings and decamped with cash and other valuables. Even properties of families of retired Government servants were not safe and their ladies were not exempted from being roughly handled and molested, and their belongings destroyed and looted.

The most woeful and humiliating story of rape and outrage of modesty on 65 ladies committed between the 25th November, 1942, and the 22nd January, 1943, within the jurisdiction of Pataspur police-station has reached us from different independent sources. Some of these cases are blood-curdling. In four cases, four military men raped one unfortunate woman successively while in three cases, two and in two cases, three. The wife of a gentleman gave birth to a son only a fortnight before she was forcibly ravished by four men. Her condition is reported to be extremely precarious. The case of another lady is still more serious. Military men committed rape on her although she implored them piteously to leave her as she had given birth to a child only six days ago. Concealing oneself

under water in a tank was no protection against the most dastardly crimes committed by these men. One lady was dragged up from the tank and criminally assaulted. Even minors of thirteen years of age were not left out. Some soldiers from the Protapdighi camp compelled one girl, aged 13, to lie down at the point of their bayonets and committed rape on her. She got severe wounds and there was hæmorrage. Rape was committed on another lady of the Scheduled Caste and as she attempted to offer some resistance she was stabbed at the thigh and left uncared for.

Incidents in certain villages in Mahisadal police-station were still more barbarous and cowardly. It is reported that about one hundred and fifty soldiers surrounded in the morning on the 9th January, 1943, the villages of Masuria, Chawk-Gazipur, Chandipur and Lakhya in union No. 11. These soldiers divided themselves into various groups and posted at different points on the main road leading to different villages as also in bushes near about. They then carried on searching enquiries into individual houses, forcibly removed the menfolk between the ages of 10 and 80 under arrest and detained them at various places till afternoon. It is also reported that these detained persons were severely beaten and some were rendered senseless. Meanwhile some of these re-entered the houses of these villages and committed rape and outrage on thirteen women, of whom one subsequently succumbed as a result of successive rape on her by three soldiers. Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee wrote to the Chief Minister almost immediately after this incident and the public is waiting to know what has been the fate of any enquiry that might have been made into the allegation.

Matters have, of late, gone so far that the Subdivisional Officer of Contai had to address on the 18th January, 1943, a letter to Captain Acton, in charge of Military there, complaining against all these "indiscriminate looting". He wrote as follows:

"Captain Acton,

.... It appears that the soldiers were looting indiscriminately without any officer, civil or military. One of the applicants happens to be a Government servant. I hope you will take necessary action into the matter. I hear a lot of complaints from Pratapdighi side—in this particular case it seems that some privates from Pratapdighi came to Egra and created all these troubles. I shall be obliged if you can help these gentlemen and put a permanent stop to all these. Needless to say that a lot of good work done by the military and police is lost through activities now alleged. 18-1-43."

The most surprising fact about these military men is that the Civil Officer, be he a member of the "steel frame" civil service or not, appears to have no voice over the highhandedness of the military. One Avimunya, a famine-stricken man, went to the *khas mahal* office centre, Contai, for doles. Adjacent to this *khas mahal* office, there is a barrack accommodating some military men. The poor fellow was severely assaulted with cane and was also threatened to be shot. He approached a local pleader who placed his case before the Subdivisional Officer. The Subdivisional Officer wanted

an explanation from the military people as to why the man who was badly in need of doles was assaulted. One Lt. Southerland gave a reply to the Subdivisional Officer's letter and this reply was extremely arrogant and insolent. He wrote—

"The individual concerned was myself. The Indian in question was loitering around our billet. My sergeant told him to move off but he did not. Even when the cudgel was used on him, he moved off slowly. I have not yet had my instruction to fire on crowds, five constituting a crowd. So this man was lucky, he got off so lightly."

This was after the cyclone!

A Special Magistrate was also in charge of relief in a certain area in the Contai subdivision, was disgusted with the nature of work that he was asked to do at night and he wrote to the Subdivisional Officer of Contai that either he should be asked to do relief in the day time or his duties might be confined to raids along with the military at night. He thought that the distribution of relief in the day time was inconsistent with raids at night in the houses where he distributed doles in the day time. The Subdivisional Officer, Contai, wrote in reply, "You should do both the things. The distribution of relief in the day time is not inconsistent with raids at night". In fact, it is clear that before the cyclone, the policy of the local administration was "Raid and burn the houses to demoralise the people", while the policy after the cyclone in some places was "Raid and rape the women to bring in their demoralisation and disgrace". A large number of the women who have been raped in the Pataspur area have applied to Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha to arrange for their purification according to Hindu *shastras*.

Now, Sir, in conclusion, I must say that the instances that have been referred to above are all from authentic sources and verified by persons who are directly in contact with the people. Our demand is that the Provincial Government must set up a judicial enquiry into these excesses and the military authorities must see that those soldiers who have been guilty of such excesses do not escape punishment.

In a recent debate on the "Present situation" in the Central Assembly session, the Hon'ble Mr. Aney and the Hon'ble Sir Sultan Ahmed gave assurances on behalf of Government that "if complaints of excess on the part of police or the military, while quelling the disturbances, were made to the Provincial Government, they would not fail to consider and redress them". Sir Sultan is reported to have further said on the 24th September, 1942, "Government do not suggest that there may not have been cases when, in a serious disturbance such as this, there may not have been some excessive force used or innocent persons have not suffered. If there have been such cases which are authenticated, the attention of the Army Department and the Provincial Government will be drawn to them, so that they may try to see that those who have been guilty of such excesses do not escape punishment."

"The military authorities are exceedingly jealous of their reputation and the reputation of their soldiers and I have no doubt that once a case of unjustifiable shooting is brought to their notice, they are sure to take action themselves."

The Additional Secretary to the Government of Bengal is however reported to have written on the 19th January, 1943, in reply to the letter, containing all these allegations, of the General Secretary of one of these relief organisations that "Rape is a cognisable offence, and the police and the courts are available to the persons who have any complaints to make in regard to such offences." Would he have dared send a reply like this if the victims were white women?

It appears from the reply of this officer that he is completely ignorant of the fact that in these cases, panic-stricken people are afraid of giving full information unless they are guaranteed protection and immunity from further oppression and torture. There have been cases where thana officers refused to record complaints of this character. Besides, even if these people are bold enough to lodge a regular complaint in court, there is the great difficulty in identifying the actual culprits by the simple village women-folk from amongst a large number of soldiers who appear to be similar in their appearance. Moreover, this officer should have noted the patent fact that in these cases the offence was committed by the agents of Government and therefore to lodge information against them would be worse than useless. Complete protection must be assured if any enquiry is at all going to succeed.

What is needed at once is a complete reversal of the present administrative policy of repression, removal of officers who have been responsible for this and its substitution by one of tact and sympathy. The administrators should feel that the situation has been rendered far more difficult by the abnormal conditions created by war. This calls for goodwill and statesmanship on their part and a false sense of prestige should not stand in the way in bringing out the truth however harsh, and meting out justice however uncompromising.

Now, Sir, time is very short and I can only appeal to Government that if a committee of enquiry is to be formed at all it should be done immediately. The Ministry should not support these irresponsible acts on the part of their officers.

There is one other thing that I would like to mention. By tendering resignation Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee has demonstrated before the public that the Ministry are quite helpless in the matter, but so long when Sir Nazimuddin was in power we noticed that they always supported the wrong action of Government officers and took upon themselves the full responsibility. I hope that good counsel will prevail with the present Ministry and they will take suitable action in the matter.

Babu NARENDRA NARAYAN CHAKRABARTY: মাননীয় সভাপতি মহাশয়! আমি ডাক্তার নলিনাক্ষ সান্যাল মহাশয়ের মুলতুবী প্রস্তাব সর্বান্তঃকরণে সমর্থন ক'রে সর্বপ্রথমে বলতে চাই যদিও ডাক্তার নলিনাক্ষ সান্যাল প্রস্তাব উপস্থাপিত

কোরেছেন কিন্তু প্রস্তাবের প্রতিপাদ্য বিষয় গত ১২ই তারিখে ডাক্তার শ্যামাপ্রসাদ মুখোপাধ্যায়ের বক্তৃতার মধ্যে সবই দেখতে পাচ্ছি। তাঁর বক্তৃতার মধ্যে মেদিনীপুরের যে জলন্ত ও জীবন্ত চিত্র ফুটে উঠেছে সে চিত্র বাংলা দেশে শুধু একটা অশ্রুসিক্ত করুণ মর্মন্তুদ অবস্থার সৃষ্টি করতে পারে। তিনি সে চিত্রে যা সত্য এবং যা নিজের চোখে দেখে এসেছেন তাই উদ্ঘাটিত কোরেছেন। আজকে আমার প্রশ্ন খুব প্রাসঙ্গিক, সময়োচিত এবং স্বাভাবিক। ডাক্তার শ্যামাপ্রসাদ মুখোপাধ্যায় তাঁর ভূতপূর্ব্ব সহকর্ম্মী এবং কোয়ালিশন পার্টির মেম্বর হিসাবে বর্ত্তমান গভর্ণমেণ্টের উপর যে দোষারোপ কোরেছেন, যে দাবী জানিয়েছেন এবং যে চিত্র উদ্ঘাটিত কোরেছেন তার ভিতর কতখানি সত্য নিহিত আছে, সে অভিযোগ মিথ্যা কি না তা প্রমাণ করবার দায়িত্ব সম্পূর্ণ বর্ত্তমান মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীর উপর। ডাক্তার মুখোপাধ্যায় আজ কোয়ালিশন পার্টির মেম্বর। আজও কোয়ালিশন পার্টির মেম্বর হিসাবে তিনি যে কথা বোলেছেন সে কথা তাঁর সহকর্ম্মীরা আজকে যদি মিথ্যা বোলে উড়িয়ে দিতে যান সে দায়িত্ব তাঁদের। সে দায়িত্ব আমার নয়। গত ১২ই তারিখের বক্তৃতার পর যখন বিরোধী পক্ষের কতিপয় ব্যক্তি প্রধান মন্ত্রী মহাশয়কে জবাব দেবার জন্য অনুরোধ কোরেছিলেন তখন প্রধান মন্ত্রী মহাশয় বলেছিলেন যে জবাব তিনি পরে দেবেন। আমার মনে হয় ডাক্তার শ্যামাপ্রসাদ মুখোপাধ্যায়ের উত্থাপিত সমস্ত অভিযোগের জবাব অনেক পূর্ব্বেই দেওয়া হয়ে গেছে। ডাক্তার শ্যামাপ্রসাদ মুখোপাধ্যায় এমন কিছু নূতন কথা বলেন নি, এমন কিছু নূতন সমস্যার অবতারণা করেন নি, এমন কিছু নূতন ঘটনার উল্লেখ পর্য্যন্ত করেন নি যা তাঁর পদত্যাগপত্রে বলেন নি। গত ৬ই ডিসেম্বর তারিখে গভর্ণমেণ্টের পক্ষ থেকে বর্ত্তমান মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীর যুক্ত বিবৃতিতে যে কথা বলা হয়েছে তা ডাক্তার মুখোপাধ্যায়ের বক্তব্যের সম্পূর্ণ বিরোধী। ডাক্তার মুখোপাধ্যায় অত্যন্ত দৃঢ়তার সঙ্গে এবং বিশেষ বিশেষ ঘটনার উল্লেখ ক'রে বলেছেন যে মেদিনীপুরে যে দুষ্কার্য্য অনুষ্ঠিত হয়েছে তার দায়িত্ব সেখানকার অফিসিয়ালদের, কিন্তু বর্ত্তমান মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীর যুক্ত বিবৃতিতে বলা হয়েছে যে সেখানকার অফিসিয়ালদের কোন দোষ ছিল না। সেখানকার—সেই মেদিনীপুরের অধিবাসীদের দুষ্কার্য্যের দরুণ সেখানে যথাসময়ে এবং যথোপযুক্ত রিলিফ্ দেওয়া সম্ভবপর হয় নি। যুক্ত বিবৃতিতে একথা স্পষ্ট বলা হয়েছে যে মেদিনীপুরের কংগ্রেস সভা, কংগ্রেসের যারা সেবক বোলে অভিহিত এবং কংগ্রেস অনুরাগী মেদিনীপুরবাসী দুষ্কার্য্যের জন্য গভর্ণমেণ্ট সেখানে রিলিফ কার্য্য সুষ্ঠুরূপে পরিচালিত করতে পারেন নি। গভর্ণমেণ্টের যথেষ্ট পরিমাণে আন্তরিকতা থাকা সত্ত্বেও সেবা কার্য্য পর্য্যাপ্ত পরিমাণে চালানো সম্ভবপর হয় নি। এটা মন্ত্রী মহাশয়গণ যুক্ত বিবৃতিতে প্রকাশ কোরেছেন গত ৬ই ডিসেম্বর তারিখে। আজকে যে দাবী জানিয়েছেন ডাক্তার মুখোপাধ্যায় তার উত্তরে মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলী নূতন কোরে বলবেন কিনা আমি জানি না যে সেখানকার সরকারী কর্ম্মচারীরা সত্য সত্যই দোষী। সে দিনকার যুক্ত বিবৃতিতে গভর্ণমেণ্ট অত্যন্ত স্পষ্টভাবে এবং দৃঢ়তার সঙ্গে সরকারী কর্ম্মচারীদের আচরণ সমর্থন করেছিলেন, আজ করবেন কিনা জানি না। সেদিনকার যুক্ত বিবৃতিতে স্পষ্টাক্ষরে বলা হয়েছিল মেদিনীপুরের সরকারী কর্ম্মচারীদের উদারতা এবং মহানুভবতা, তাদের কর্ম্মক্ষমতা এবং সর্ব্বোপরি তাদের জনসেবার অকুণ্ঠ পরিচয়ের কথাই ঘোষণা করা হয়েছিল। আজকে তারই উপসংহারে মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলী কি বলবেন জানি না কিন্তু মনে হয়, সেদিনকার যুক্ত বিবৃতি তাঁদেরই একজন সহকর্ম্মী ডাক্তার মুখোপাধ্যায় যে অভিযোগ এনেছেন তার সম্পূর্ণ বিরোধী। বর্ত্তমান মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলী এই বিরোধী অবস্থার কি কোরে সুষ্ঠু সঙ্গতি দেখাবেন আমরা তা দেখবার আশা রাখি। বর্ত্তমান মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীর সম্মুখে আজ যে পরস্পর-বিরোধী সমস্যা দেখা দিয়েছে এর মীমাংসা তাঁদের করতে হবে, এই সমস্যার সম্মুখীন তাঁদের হ'তে হবে।

ডাক্তার মুখোপাধ্যায়, যিনি কিছু কাল পর্য্যন্ত তাঁদের সহকর্ম্মী ছিলেন, অন্যতম মন্ত্রী ছিলেন, আজকে যিনি কোয়ালিশন পার্টির বিশিষ্ট সভ্য এবং সহ-সভাপতি, তিনি আজকে যে অভিযোগ এনেছেন, কোয়ালিশন পার্টির মেম্বর হিসাবে আজকে যে অভিযোগ উপস্থাপিত ক'রেছেন মন্ত্রীদের নিজেদের কার্য্যের কৈফিয়ত যদি তার সঙ্গে সঙ্গতি রক্ষা করতে না পারে তাহলে বাংলার কাছে তাঁদের কৈফিয়ত দিতে হবে, এবং সমস্ত ভারতবর্ষের কাছে তাঁদের কৈফিয়ত দিতে হবে। আমি শুধু একটী কথা বলব: এই যে মেদিনীপুরের দুর্য্যোগ, এই দুর্য্যোগের অনেক প্রকার ইতিহাস এখানে ব্যক্ত করা হয়েছে, এই দুর্য্যোগের অনেক কৈফিয়তও দেওয়া হয়েছে। গত ১২ই, ১৩ই এবং ১৪ই নভেম্বর তারিখে রাজস্ব-সচিব মহাশয় Upper Houseএ বিবৃতি দিয়েছেন এবং সেখানেও একথা আছে যে সেখানে লোকহিতকর জনসেবা relief work ভালভাবে চালান যায় নি due to political unrest সেখানে একথা স্বীকার করা হয় নি যে বাস্তবিক সেখানে এমন একটী অবস্থা হয়েছিল, সরকারী কর্ম্মচারী এবং জনসাধারণের মধ্যে এমন একটী সংঘর্ষের অবস্থা ছিল, এবং সরকারী কর্ম্মচারীদের কিছু পরিমাণ দোষ ছিল বা জনসাধারণের কিছু পরিমাণ দোষ ছিল যার ফলে এ রকম একটী কাজ গভর্ণমেণ্ট সম্পূর্ণভাবে চালাতে পারেন নি। রাজকর্ম্মচারীদের দোষ দেখান হয় নি, একটী কথাও তাদের বিরুদ্ধে রাজস্ব-সচিব কর্ত্তৃক বলা হয় নি। সে সময় শ্যামাপ্রসাদ মুখোপাধ্যায় মহাশয়ও মন্ত্রী ছিলেন। আজকে শ্যামাপ্রসাদ মুখোপাধ্যায় মহাশয় যে সমস্ত অভিযোগ উপস্থাপিত কোরেছেন সেদিনকার জবাব তাঁর সঙ্গে পরামর্শ কোরে দেওয়া হয়েছিল কিনা জানি না, কিন্তু এ দুটোও পরস্পর-বিরোধী। তারপর supplementary questions ও answersএর মধ্যেও সঙ্গতি খুঁজে পাওয়া যায় না। Government communiqueতে স্পষ্ট বলা হয়েছে যে, মেদিনীপুরে জনসাধারণের অত্যাচারের ফলেই relief work ইচ্ছানুরূপ করা যায় নি। যানবাহন ছিল না, ঘরবাড়ী পুড়িয়ে দেওয়া হয়েছিল, রাস্তা-ঘাট নষ্ট করা হয়েছিল। কিন্তু মন্ত্রী মহাশয়ের Upper Houseএ যে বিবৃতি তার মধ্যে ছিল যে ঝড়ে এগুলো সব গেছে। ১২ই নভেম্বর তারিখে মন্ত্রী মহাশয় বলেছেন যে ঝড়ে communication নষ্ট হয়ে গেছে, রাস্তাঘাট ভেঙ্গে গেছে, যানবাহনের কোন আয়োজন করা সেখানে সম্ভবপর হয় নি; কিন্তু ৬ই ডিসেম্বর তারিখে মন্ত্রী মহাশয়দের যুক্ত বিবৃতিতে দেখা যাচ্ছে যে, কংগ্রেসপন্থীদের অত্যাচারের ফলেই যানবাহনের ব্যবস্থা করা সম্ভবপর হয় নি, তাদের অত্যাচারের ফলেই সেবাকার্য্য চালান সম্ভবপর হয় নি, রাস্তাঘাট কংগ্রেসীরা ধ্বংস করেছিল, টেলিগ্রাফ লাইন নষ্ট করেছিল। শুধু তাই নয়; সব চেয়ে যেটা অদ্ভুত সেটার কৈফিয়ৎ গভর্ণমেণ্ট কি দেবেন, কল্পনা করতেও পারি না। একটী বা দুটী নয়, অনেক—কয়েকজন বিজ্ঞ ব্যক্তির সমন্বয়ে বর্ত্তমান গভর্ণমেণ্ট গঠিত; এবং যেখানে জনসাধারণের অর্থে এতগুলি মন্ত্রী পোষিত হ'য়ে আসচেন সেই গভর্ণমেণ্ট ১৬ই ও ১৭ই অক্টোবর হলো এই ভয়াবহ ঘটনা আর প্রথম এর খবর পেলেন ১৯শে তারিখে। আমি একথা মাননীয় প্রমথনাথ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়ের বক্তৃতা থেকে সংগ্রহ কোরে বলচি। ১৯শে তারিখের রাত্রিতে প্রথম খবর পেলেন কিন্তু মন্ত্রী মহাশয় পান নি। তিনি কোথায় ছিলেন জানিনা, তার মধ্যে লেখা নাই। তার পরে ২২শে তারিখে নীহার চক্রবর্ত্তী বোলে একজন ভদ্রলোককে মেদিনীপুরে পাঠান সম্ভবপর হয়েছিল। মন্ত্রী মহাশয় কেন যেতে পারেন নি ২২শে তারিখে? ১৯শে তারিখে খবর পেয়ে ২২শে তারিখে যদি নীহার চক্রবর্ত্তীকে পাঠান সম্ভবপর হয় তাহ'লে যাবার উপযুক্ত যানবাহন পাওয়া গিয়েছিল, রাস্তাঘাট কিছু ছিল। তাহ'লে নীহার চক্রবর্ত্তীকে না পাঠিয়ে মন্ত্রী মহাশয় কেন নিজে যান্ নি, কমিশনার কেন যান্ নি, এডিশনাল কমিশনার কেন যান্ নি, উর্দ্ধতন কর্ম্মচারীরা কেন যান্ নি? মন্ত্রী মহাশয়দের

মধ্যে মাননীয় শ্যামাপ্রসাদ মুখোপাধ্যায় ও রাজস্ব-সচিব মহাশয় গিয়েছেন ২৯শে তারিখে। এত বড় একটা দুর্যোগ যাতে ৫০ হাজার লোক মারা গেল, যাতে ৩০ লক্ষ লোক হলো সর্ব্বহারা, ৬০ হাজার গৃহপালিত পশু মরে গেল, লক্ষ লক্ষ ঘরবাড়ী ধ্বংস হয়ে গেল, সেখানে মন্ত্রী মহাশয় আগে যেতে পারলেন না কেন? যাবার কি কোন চেষ্টা কোরেছিলেন আগে! বলবেন টেলি-গ্রাফ করতে পারেন নি। হেটে যান নি কেন, গড়িয়ে যান্ নি কেন? (laughter and cheers) মানুষের জীবন নিয়ে ছেলেখেলা দেশবাসী সইবে না। ডাক্তার শ্যামাপ্রসাদ মুখোপাধ্যায় আজ বক্তৃতা করেছেন, কিন্তু তাঁকেও আমি রেহাই দিতে চাই না। তিনিও সে দিন মন্ত্রী ছিলেন। কেন খবর এল না? তার কি account দেবেন? জার্ম্মাণীর raidএ ইংলণ্ডের কত লোক মারা গেছে, জাপানী raidএ ভারতবর্ষের কতলোক মারা গেছে তার খবর এল আর এই বাংলা দেশের ভিতর এতবড় একটা ঝঞ্ঝা বয়ে গেল, ৪০।৫০ হাজার লোক মরে গেল, ভেসে গেল, কলকাতার এতো নিকটে থাকা সত্ত্বেও খবর এল না কেন? তার কৈফিয়ত কি চাওয়া অন্যায়? শুধু তাই নয়, Contaiএর যে ঘটনা তা শুনলে বিস্মিত ও হতবাক হতে হবে। আমি নিজে সেখানে গিয়েছি। Contaiএর Subdivisional Officerএর যে বাংলো তা অনেক উপরে। আর নীচে সহর ও গ্রাম। সেই Contaiএ যখন ৩৫ ফুট উঁচু হয়ে জল এসে ভাসিয়ে নিয়ে যায় তখন সেখানকার একজন রায় বাহাদুর অবন্তী মাইতি সবডিভিসনাল অফিসারের পায়ের নীচে পড়ে বলেন যে "সাহেব! নৌকা ঘাটে বাঁধা আছে, সেটা ছেড়ে দাও, নৌকা পেলে অনেক লোককে বাঁচাতে পারব।" তখনও লোক গাছে ঝুলে প্রাণ বাঁচাচ্ছিল। অবন্তী বাবু দারোগাকে বোলে চুপি চুপি দুবার নৌকা পাঠান। তৃতীয় বার নৌকা পাওয়া গেল না, নৌকাকে ডাক বাংলোয় বেঁধে রাখা হ'ল, দেওয়া হ'ল না। অবন্তী মাইতি আমাকে বলেছিলেন যে সেই একখানা নৌকা যদি আমরা পেতাম তাহ'লে ৫শ লোকের জীবন আমরা বাঁচাতে পারতাম। সেটা কখন জানেন? রাত্রিতে নয়, অন্ধকারে নয়, বেলা ১২ টার সময়, প্রকাশ্য দিবালোকে Contaiএর সবডিভিসনাল অফিসার পরম নির্ব্বিকারভাবে সেই হত্যার দৃশ্য দেখেছিলেন, উপভোগ করেছিলেন।

(A voice—"S. Sen, I.C.S.")

আমি তাঁকে জিজ্ঞাসা করেছিলাম, মহাশয়! এখন ঘরবাড়ী পোড়ান হয়? বল্লেন, 'না, এখন পোড়ান হয় না,' অর্থাৎ আগে হ'তো তা' স্বীকার করলেন। আমার সামনে, কুমার দেবেন্দ্রলাল খাঁর সামনে শ্রীযুক্ত অতুল কুমারের সামনে। সেখানে ৫শ লোক মারা গেছে। শাস্-মলের মামার বাড়ী দেখে এলাম, ধু ধু করচে শ্মশানের মত। এক একটা গ্রাম শেষ হয়ে গেছে। আমরা ৮ই ডিসেম্বর গিয়ে দেখেছি তখনও শত শত মৃতদেহ পড়ে আছে, দুর্গন্ধে সেখান দিয়ে যাওয়া যায় না, শকুনি, চিল খাচ্ছে। এই অবস্থা সেখানে দেখেছি।

তার পরে রিলিফ। আপনারা হয়ত অনেকে জানেন না যে সাইক্লোনের পূর্ব্বে কাঁথি এবং তমলুকে ৯০০ টিউবওয়েল ছিল, damaged হয়েছে তার মধ্যে ১৩১টী। এটা সরকারী খবর। গভর্ণমেণ্ট নিজে স্বীকার করেছেন, প্রমথ বাবু নিজে স্বীকার করেছেন যে সেখানকার পুকুর, নদী, নালা, কুয়া সমস্ত নষ্ট হয়েছে। তাহ'লে টিউবওয়েলের প্রয়োজনীয়তা আরও বেড়েছিল। কিন্তু আমি দৃঢ়তার সঙ্গে বল্‌তে পারি যে আজ পর্য্যন্ত ৫।৬ টার বেশী tubewell সেখানে বসানো হয় নি এবং এতথ্য অভ্রান্ত। আজ কলেরা যেভাবে সেখানে দেখা দিয়েছে তার জন্য দায়ী কে? নিশ্চয়ই local officersরা। কারণ মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলী সেখানে বসে সমস্ত কিছু করতে

পারেন না। সত্য কথা : কিন্তু আজ local officersদের দায়িত্ব তাঁদেরও বহন করতে হবে। সে দায়িত্ব তাঁরা পরিহার করতে পারেন না। এ পর্য্যন্ত আমরা শুনি নাই যে local officersরা তাঁদের কথা শোনেন না ; আমরা শুনি নাই যে local officersরা তাঁদের order carry out করেন না। যদি তা হয় তাঁরা প্রকাশ্যে সে কথা বলুন যে local officersরা আমাদের বাধ্য নয়, আমরা তাদের চালাতে পারি না। তা না বলা পর্য্যন্ত একথা বলা বাতুলতা বা হাস্যাস্পদ হবে যে local officersরা নিজেদের দায়িত্বে অত্যাচার চালিয়েছে, স্ত্রীলোকদের উপর অত্যাচার করেছে, ঘরবাড়ী লুণ্ঠন করেছে, এবং নিরীহ দুর্ভিক্ষপ্রপীড়িত ক্ষুধাতুর মানব যারা তাদের খেতে দেয় নি। এটা লোকাল অফিসীয়ালদের দোষ বল্‌লে চলবে না। মন্ত্রীরা সে কর্ত্তব্য এবং দায়িত্ব পরিহার করতে পারেন না। অত্যাচার যে করে ও অত্যাচার যে সহে "তব দণ্ড দোঁহে যেন তৃণ সম দহে"। হয়তো স্থানীয় কর্ম্মচারীরা প্রত্যক্ষভাবে অনাচারের অনুষ্ঠাতা, কিন্তু গভর্ণমেণ্ট সেই অনাচার মুখ বুঁজে সহ্য ক'রে গেছেন ; কার্য্যকরী প্রতিবাদের প্রমাণ আমরা পাই নি। মেদিনীপুরে এখনও রিলিফ কি ভাবে দেওয়া হবে তার পূর্ণ বিষয় পরিকল্পনা আজো স্থির হয় নি। আজও সেখানে আলোচনা চলচে। আজ তারা কলেরায় মরচে, তাদের বস্ত্র নাই, তাদের খাদ্য নাই, তাদের পেটে ক্ষুধার আগুণ দাউ দাউ কোরে জ্বল্‌চে। মহাত্মা গান্ধী যেমন লর্ড লিনলিথ্‌গোকে লিখেছিলেন যে Enquiry Committee যে দিন করবে সে দিন অনেকে সাক্ষ্য দেবার থাকবে না, যে দিন তদন্ত হবে, সে দিন, অনেক document নষ্ট হ'য়ে যাবে ; সেই রকম আজ বল্‌চি অনেক হতভাগ্য Enquiry Committee বসবার বহু পূর্ব্বে ইহলোক ত্যাগ কোরে চলে যাবে ; মৃত্যুই হবে ওদের জলন্ত সাক্ষ্য ; আর এই অসহায় মৃত্যুর মধ্য দিয়েই তারা জাতির কাছে তাদের চরম অভিযোগ জানিয়ে গেছে।

(The member having reached the time-limit resumed his seat.)

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, within the time, the limited time at our disposal, it is hardly possible for me to narrate in detail the tragic events of Midnapore. I shall just attempt, Sir, to give as briefly as possible a picture of the background of the Midnapore situation. The House should recall that long before the civil disobedience movement had started last year, we had the denial policy enforced in many parts of Bengal. So far as Midnapore was concerned, the policy of forcible removal of boats and other conveyances, specially bicycles, went on unabated. The fact remains that nearly 10,000 bicycles were taken away from one district alone and a large number of boats were asked to be surrendered within a very short time and quite a few hundreds were forcibly destroyed by the local authorities because the boats were not surrendered within the prescribed time. This has to be borne in mind in order to realise how strong were the feelings in the minds of the local inhabitants of that district. In fact, as I had occasion to mention this to one of the highest officers in this province at that time, if ever the political movement was started in Midnapore, Mahatma Gandhi would not have to import workers from outside. The Bengal Government had created a band of workers by the very policy which it pursued with regard to the denial scheme. (Interruption.) What did the interruptor say? If my friend to my right wants to interrupt, let him interrupt in a manner so that I can hear him and give him a fitting reply.

Now, Sir, that is the background so far as the Denial Policy was concerned. Then came the Civil Disobedience movement. I am not going to narrate, Sir, in detail how that movement went on in that district. I shall accept for my present purpose the statement which has been made that this movement took a very serious turn and there was a deliberate challenge thrown out to Government which was functioning in that part of the province. Let us assume that the situation in Midnapore took a very bad turn, but at the same time it is true that the men who were carrying on those subversive or open activities were non-violent in character. When the Chief Minister makes his statement, I dare say he will himself admit that there was a singular absence of violence until at a later stage when due to tremendous repression the situation went out of control. Tremendous repression went on; there were shooting of persons, indiscriminate arrests, shooting of women; an old lady of 73 was shot at thrice until she lay dead on the ground before the crowd. Young children were shot at—not shot at the feet but shot at those parts of the body which would inevitably bring death. Deliberate shooting went on, indiscriminate arrests went on, burning of houses went on, looting of houses went on. Reports came to us to say—that was before the cyclone—that things were going on like this in Midnapore. Sir, this was how the district administration was being carried on. Now, at that time who issued instruction from headquarters for deliberate burning of houses of innocent people? So long as I was in office I did not know it. I cannot say whether the Chief Minister would be able to say under whose orders this deliberate violence had been committed by Government in respect of persons who were absolutely innocent. Then came the cyclone. Now, Sir, I would beg of the House to divide the two issues: first, you have the happenings before the 16th of October when this movement—let us admit that it was of an extraordinary character was agitating the minds of thousands of people of Midnapore district. Any legitimate steps taken by the local officers for curtailing the activities of these people and re-establishing law and order must be supported by any Government which is in power. But my charge is Government officers overstepped the limits and carried on a deliberate policy of repression for the purpose of terrorising innocent people. Then came the cyclone of 16th October. Now, here, Sir, the first charge I bring forward is that the Hon'ble Chief Minister will, I hope, deal with this question—there was a deliberate suppression of news with regard to the cyclone until the Ministers had visited Midnapore and a communiqué was issued after our return on the 4th November. I have before me copies of cuttings from newspapers since the 16th October last. Any member who scrutinises the newspaper columns during those two weeks would find that not one single item of news was allowed to be published in respect of Midnapore under the direction of the Home Department of the Government of Bengal. News were allowed to be published about other parts of Bengal—about Krishnagar, about Burdwan, about Noakhali, about Faridpur—not full news but some news which gave an indication that a storm of a severe character had passed through certain areas of Bengal. In one paper, viz., in *Ananda Bazar Patrika* certain comments were made that "so much had

been said about other parts of Bengal but we have received more horried details from Midnapore." At once from the Writers' Buildings warning went to them that in future they must not refer to the happenings in Midnapore. Another paper was temporarily suppressed.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Did the Ministers know that?

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: No, it was done entirely by the Home Department. Everything was kept back from the Ministers. Of course it would be for the Home Minister to say whether it was done with the Home Minister's knowledge or not.

Sir, when we demanded an explanation from the powers who guide the Home Department, the answer that was given was that military considerations prevented the circulation of this news. Now, Sir, I scrutinised the orders which were passed so far as military considerations were concerned. There were only two considerations on which news was to be censored from the public: one of them was that no news should be circulated which would disclose to the enemy the serious weather condition in a particular area, and the other was that no news should be circulated which would disclose information to the enemy that communications had been broken, but I claim it was certainly possible that news could have been published during this period without infringing the directions which were given by the Central Government regarding these two items. In fact, we reminded some of these officers: "you wanted to keep information back from the enemy, but according to your own report the enemy had already announced through the radio that one lakh of Bengalis had died as a result of the terrible cyclone. But you are keeping back information from Bengal and the whole of India. Now the result was not only an instance of criminal negligence but has been disastrous so far as relief is concerned." Sir, we ourselves did not know what actually was happening in Midnapore until we saw with our own eyes the state of affairs there. When we came back from Midnapore some of us had to inform the department concerned that if no communiqué was issued by them the Ministers would issue a communiqué on their own responsibility in violation of the orders of the Home Department. And then a communiqué was published. Now, who, I ask, was guilty of this constructive manslaughter, due to want of relief after the cyclone, throughout the period from 16th October to 3rd November, 1942? The Hon'ble the Chief Minister must have made enquiries, and what reply he will give we shall, of course, listen to with great interest.

Then, Sir, with regard to the local officers the same thing happened. Reports came from district officers minimising the gravity of the situation and the report from the District Officer himself—let the Chief Minister produce that interesting document—contained the statement that relief should be withheld for one month for the purpose of teaching a permanent lesson to the people. The Revenue Department sent an officer for doing relief work. Let the Revenue Minister stand up and say what that officer reported, what the Additional Commissioner who was appointed to look after the relief had reported. The report of the Subdivisional Officer of

Contai was that people did not come forward to take relief. Sir, I have also copies of interesting documents here. Now that was the report of the Subdivisional Officer of Contai. But when another officer went there, he reported that thousands of hungry people came and took relief. But the report of the Subdivisional Officer was that no relief was necessary. Sir, the situation was bungled like that for weeks. Practically for one month there was no organised relief given to the people. The Revenue Department tried to do something but there was obstruction coming from the local officers themselves.

Then, there is another thing. Government failed and failed hopelessly on account of the obstructive attitude deliberately taken by certain officers supported by the Governor himself, and the policy adopted was that of relief by day and repression by night. Now, Sir, there were absconders whom the police wanted to arrest under the direction of the local officers with the cognisance and approval of the Provincial Government. Now there the Ministers did not come into the picture because they found themselves helpless. The Chief Minister wanted to do something but the Governor set his foot down, and although relief was to be given by day, raid and repression were to take place by night and burning of villages and searching and looting of houses should continue in the meantime. Wtih regard to this policy I would ask you to get hold of the reports of some of the Muslim Relief officers and you will find that at least one made a statement to the effect that it was horrible to expect them to give relief by day while during the night they had themselves to go to the military people and lead them for the purpose of burning the villages which had been given relief in the day. Can anybody conceive of a more shameless policy which has gone on unrestricted in the rural areas of Midnapore for a long time? Now, Sir, the Governor and the Revenue Minister issued an appeal through the radio. What was the spirit of that appeal? The appeal of the Governor was "We want to forgive and forget the past". But may I ask what could have necessitated the Government to carry on this policy of repression? We as Ministers said that a new policy was to be pursued in the interest of peace and ordered Government. I said, Mr. Basu said, the Chief Minister said, and Mr. Banerjee said that we were prepared to take the responsibility for the peace of Midnapore and we would hold ourselves responsible for the future conduct of the people there: trust us. But the officers were not prepared to trust us. Not the local officers alone but those gentlemen who to-day really preside over the destinies of the Home Department backed by certain important officers of the Police Department said: it is not possible: we cannot trust them. What was the reply given? In one case the reply given was, "Can we trust the men at Midnapore who are the heirs and successors of those who had murdered Burge, Peddie and Douglas?" In spite of the tremendous calamity, people in high quarters could not rise equal to the occasion and behaved as true descendants of O'dwyer and Dyer.

Although the men themselves inside the political jail—their faces come back to my mind every day; their families had been destroyed—were saying that they were prepared to come forward and work, the officers wanted a

dāskhat from them which must be circulated beforehand saying that they condemn the movement. They said "We are prepared to go to this extent that there would be no political movement in the district of Midnapore so long as the present state continues." We said "That will not do. You will have to say that the political movement will be stopped in view of the great disaster". That was my language and that language was accepted by them and they agreed to this much "You release us for seven days and we undertake to come back to jail if we cannot convince our workers that the political activities must come to an end because of this huge catastrophe which has now come upon the district of Midnapore." That offer was there, but that did not satisfy certain selected officers of the Home Department; that did not satisfy the Governor of Bengal and therefore even to-day, the 15th of February, 1943, the Ministers find themselves helpless to release these men although the Home Minister at one stage definitely passed orders that these men should be released and should be trusted. It is no use my going into the details, but this is the true picture of Midnapore. Midnapore is a case of abject failure of civil administration.

Sir, what is it that we demand? We demand a public enquiry. I do not say, Sir, that the Chief Minister will here get up and condemn his officers. He has the version placed before him by the officers themselves.

Look at these cases of attacks on women. It is the systematic policy of someone—I do not know who he is. Hindu troops are sent to Feni and they outrage Muslim women there and Muslim troops are sent to Hindu districts who outrage Hindu women. It is just setting one community against another and it is a part of an organised policy. Why could not Muslim troops be sent to Feni and these disgraceful incidents avoided? Brutes are let loose on innocent and helpless women. We have the allegation made that a woman who had given birth to a child only 14 days ago was ravished by three men successively and again after a fortnight there was another attack; and that unfortunate woman died a few days later.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Dr. Mookerjee, your time is up.

(Cries of "We want to hear him" from different sections of the House.)

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Sir, one minute more. I know there are many other speakers who would like to speak and I do not like to monopolise the debate on Midnapore, but what I would like to say is this—I shall conclude with a statement—what we want really is that there must be an open, independent, judicial enquiry. We demand this of the Chief Minister. I know the Chief Minister in his heart feels that an enquiry is necessary, and if the Chief Minister is prevented from doing so, let him get up and take this House, which consists of representatives of the people of this Province, into his confidence and tell us why it is that he is prevented from doing it.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Your time is already over.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Sir, let me finish my last sentence.

I am saying this in order to strengthen the hands of the Chief Minister. I cannot read the extracts from the speeches delivered by Sir Reginald Maxwell, Home Member of the Government of India, by Sir Sultan Ahmed, by Mr. Aney and by others in the Central Legislature when such allegations were brought before that House. What they said was that it was open to the Provincial Government in suitable cases to appoint independent tribunals of enquiry and see what the truth was. We are asking the Chief Minister that he will accept our proposal that an enquiry shall be instituted. If he is prevented from doing it, then also he must take the House and the public of Bengal into his fullest confidence and tell us who it is who is preventing the Chief Minister from accepting our recommendation.

Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Sir, the very powerful speech of Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee which we have listened just now is bound to move the members of this House and there is no doubt that very serious allegations have been made. But, Sir, we on this side of the House are in this difficult position that whereas Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee at the time when he resigned, when he spoke in this House the other day and perhaps even today maintains that his ex-colleagues in the present Council of Ministers are in agreement with him and support the contention that he has put forward, we find that actually the Government have issued a communiqué absolutely demolishing the case of Dr. Mookerjee and supporting their officers. Sir, I maintain that the time has come when members of this House and the people of the province are entitled to expect from the Chief Minister and the present Ministry a definite and unequivocal declaration of their attitude, their policy. We have found that whereas throughout the period of one year the Hon'ble Chief Minister and his colleagues have in this House supported the action of the officers, among his friends and outside this House he has gone on maintaining that he is helpless, that he does not support the action of the officers and that he cannot do anything. Sir, I feel that this kind of action will be considered most despicable and mean way of carrying on government. We must know where we stand as far as the Ministry is concerned. Is the Chief Minister prepared to support the action of his officers? If he finds that they are not in the right—and he is the person in the best position to know whether his officers have been in the right or in the wrong—and if he has got even doubts in his mind, then there is no doubt that he should accept the demand which has been put forward in this resolution, namely, the appointment of a judicial committee of enquiry.

Sir, I would like to place before the House certain facts in connection with the Midnapore affairs. First of all it must not be forgotten that Midnapore was an invasion area and whatever may be our attitude about the British policy in India I am sure that as far as the people of Bengal are concerned there are no two opinions as regards the danger from invasion and the determination of everyone to see that our land is not invaded, because I feel that the horrors which have been related here would have been ten times worse if, God, forbid, Bengal had been invaded by the enemies. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Question! I do not think the

Japanese could outrival these people.) In these things I do not agree with Dr. Sanyal. It is a well-known fact that there is nothing to compare with the horrors of invasion. If you go through the history of any land that has been invaded it will be absurd to suggest this. Therefore, I maintain *that when law and order broke down in that area there were very grave* responsibilities placed on the local officials and it has also to be remembered that the District Magistrate of Midnapore is an officer whose services as far in the past is concerned have been recognised by Government. He is an officer who has had the support and sympathy of the masses as far as his work was concerned in the various districts previous to his taking charge of Midnapore. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: He was sued in a court and convicted.) Here again I must correct the honourable member that as far as the case brought against him was concerned, he was honourably acquitted by the District Judge on appeal. (Interruptions.) (Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I hope there will be no interruption.) But I still maintain that if that officer has been guilty of exceeding his duties or if he has been guilty of doing what he should not have done as District Magistrate, then certainly it is the duty of the Home Minister and Government to take him to task.

Now, Sir, there are also these things which we have got to remember. As far as the speech of Dr. Mookerjee is concerned there are certain things which I should like very much the Chief Minister to make absolutely clear. What I cannot understand is that when a Minister and particularly the Home Minister got reports about the deliberate burning of houses why did he not take any action. I would like to know what action did he himself take. Did he call for a report? Did he take the trouble of going to Midnapore? Did he try to satisfy himself as to whether these reports were right or wrong? Did he try to put a stop to these things? It is grossly unfair for a Minister to suggest that he himself will take no action, he himself will do nothing when he is in a position to do something. I maintain that if these things have happened, then the Home Minister primarily and the Council of Ministers are responsible for these things being continued. They should have first of all asked for a report and called for an explanation, and if not satisfied, it was their duty when conditions were so serious that they should have gone to that place and seen things with their own eyes. If still after that they could not prevent recurrence of these things, then they should have brought the matter before the public and appealed to them and done something. But what do we find? I do not know what the Home Minister is going to say today to these charges.

I now come to the question of news about cyclone. This again is a matter which absolutely passes my comprehension. If I remember aright in one of the statements—perhaps it is now proscribed—of Dr. Mookerjee it is mentioned that for 16 days the Ministers themselves had no information about this. Now I ask what is the position of the Ministers and particularly the Chief Minister. Are we to assume that while the permanent officials, Indians and Europeans, were trusted by the Head of the Province, neither the Chief Minister nor any other member of the Council of Ministers, not one of them was found to be worthly of trust? (Laughter.) I can

understand that individual Ministers, because of their past associations, might not have been trusted with such an information, but are we to assume that there was not a single Minister in the whole Council of Ministers who could not be trusted with an information which was given to the European and even the Indian officers. Even the Indian officers got the news but the Ministers did not get it. They were placed, I am sorry to say, in the same perhaps worse position than a *chaprasi*, because a *chaprasi* could have seen the file while taking it from one department to another, but as far as the Ministers were concerned they were not allowed to see anything. I want to know: have they ever asked the Head of the Province as to the reasons why they were not trusted with the information. Surely they could have been told that this was a very serious matter and that they must not give out the information. If half a dozen officials could know and keep the news secret, certainly half a dozen Ministers could also know and keep it secret. Why were the Ministers treated in this fashion? What is their explanation? How do they justify their existence if they are treated in such a fashion? I would therefore appeal to the Chief Minister to kindly explain the position clearly. As far as the members of this House are concerned, they also expect a proper treatment from the Chief Minister. They should also demand from him, and I request the honourable members of this House to demand from him, that a definite reply as to reasons why this information was kept back should be given.

I now come to another point of Dr. Mookerjee. He says that through certain sources this information came to him. The Ministers knew that a certain information was kept back from them. They knew that certain papers were taken to task for publishing the news. They must have known that something serious had taken place Then why didn't they ask the officials what were the facts? Why didn't they go to Midnapore? Why did they sit tight for 20 days in Calcutta? What were they doing? Why did they wait for 20 days before going to Midnapore? When they thought that the officials were not doing their work properly, if the Hon'ble Ministers had gone there during these 20 days, at least some improvement could have been made, some steps could have been taken.

Now I ask not only the Chief Minister, but his Caste Hindu Colleagues particularly, to make their position clear as far as the Midnapore question is concerned. Do they support the Ministry? Do they think that the allegations are correct and excesses have been committed by the officials in that place? Do they think that the officials have discharged their duties properly or do they think they have not? I hope that for once the Chief Minister will take this House into confidence and tell us definitely one way or the other what he really thinks about this matter, and will not shelve the issue. (Interruptions.) If the Chief Minister thinks that there have been excesses, that the allegations are to a large extent correct, then I maintain that this House would demand a proper enquiry into this matter, because the allegations are of a serious nature. The Chief Minister must take the responsibility one way or the other. Either he must defend the officials or he should appoint a Committee of enquiry. I hope he will clearly express his opinion in this matter.

(Mr. Jogesh Chandra Gupta and several other members rose to speak.)

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order. It is my business to see that a fair and reasonable debate is made in this matter. The honourable members are very eager to hear the Hon'ble Chief Minister and if I can find time, certainly I will allow Messrs. Gupta, Bhowmick, Zaman and Professor Sen to speak. Now I will ask the Chief Minister to reply.

Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Sir, I suggest that the Chief Minister be allowed first of all to reply. After that the Opposition will move the closure motion. If it is carried, vote will be taken. If it is not carried, speakers will get an opportunity to go on. This is the only way. Of course I am not against the motion being talked out. The motion can be talked out provided the motion of closure is defeated.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I have been asked by the honourable Leader of the Opposition to say what I have got to say on this occasion. The practice is that the Treasury Benches should not take much of the time of the House in an adjournment motion when the time is so limited. I am entirely in the hands of the House and if you, Sir, think that I can be given some time within the little time available I am prepared to make a statement.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I feel that it will satisfy the rights of reasonable debate if Mr. Gupta takes 5 minutes, Dr. Gobinda Chandra Bhowmick takes 5 minutes, the Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu takes 5 minutes, the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee takes 5 minutes and then the Hon'ble Chief Minister winds up the debate As Mr. Gupta rose first I am asking him to speak first.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Sir, the debate comes to an end at 6-40 p.m. and you must give sufficient time to the Hon'ble Chief Minister.

Mr. J. C. GUPTA: Sir,——

Mr. A. F. STARK: We consider that the Hon'ble Chief Minister should be allowed to reply now.

Mr. J. C. GUPTA: Sir, I am already on my legs.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: After Mr. Gupta has finished, the Chief Minister will speak.

Mr. J. C. GUPTA: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the outrages are so numerous and loathsome that it is difficult to give a sufficient description of all that happened within the short time at the disposal of members. Sir, the period of oppression at Midnapore may be divided into two parts—the first between the 14th of August and the 15th of October and the second after the cyclone of the 16th of October up till today. Sir, I am here not to support any action of lawlessness or any movement that the Congressmen or sympathisers of the Congress movement may have started. I am sure that those who started the independence movement did so with their eyes open and that they were prepared for some amount of oppression though

not of the barbarous type that we have seen. But, Sir, what seems to me to be most strange is this. No person who lays any claim to civilization can hit an enemy when he is fallen But what do we find? After the terrible cyclone at Midnapore they did not show what ordinary decency of a human being requires them to do. Sir I have taken this opportunity of intervening in this debate because I have an information which I should like the Hon'ble Minister either to confirm or to deny. I am informed, and that very reliably, that soon after the cyclone the District Magistrate of the place did wire to a high Government official here that there should not be any outsider there to do any relief work as the district is the abode of rebels. I have a further information, and I want the Home Minister either to deny or confirm it that the Subdivisional Officer of Contai had issued a circular saying that "particular attention is to be paid to see that no person by giving help exploits the situation and enhances his prestige and no relief is given until the political leaders (whom they may or may not know) are handed over to them." Was this, I ask, the occasion for the purpose of following the programme of political repression, and I ask whether our Ministers are mere onlookers or not. I therefore join wholeheartedly with the demand for an impartial judicial enquiry.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Sir,—

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: If the Hon'ble Chief Minister does not speak now, we will have no other alternative but to move that the question be now put.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, it is easier, much easier, to skate on thin ice on the brink of a precipice on a mountain top than to deal effectively with the charges, the counter-charges, the remarks and the counter-remarks that have been made by honourable members in the course of this debate. For the last five months Midnapore has not merely loomed large before the public eye, but practically the political history of Bengal during this period has been the history of Midnapore. My esteemed friend, Sir Nazimuddin, has characterised the ways of this Government as mean and despicable. I may not reply in the language that he has used, but I would ask him to look into his own mind and to ask his conscience the position of a Home Minister under the system of Government which prevails in this country. When the Congress movement was started in this country in August last, it had to be met with strong measures by civil authorities and by the military. Honourable members will then realise the unreasonableness of the demand that Ministers should go and interfere in every action that had been taken by the local authorities in order to restore law and order. There must be some limit to ministerial interference and there must be some latitude given to local authorities. I do not thereby mean that——

Dr. GOBINDA CHANDRA BHOWMICK: Sir, as I am not given an opportunity to speak, I am going away.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I do not mean that whatever the local officers may do should be supported; nor do I hold the view that whatever they may have done should be condemned. The question is whether in the circumstances then prevailing the action taken by the local authorities was really the proper action that should have been taken or whether the action taken was merely cloak for committing deliberate oppressions on innocent and unarmed people. In order to appreciate the measures that had been taken by the local officers in dealing with the Midnapore situation, I shall have to tell the House very briefly the previous history of the political situation in that district. I leave out of account all that had happened in Midnapore during the days of the civil disobedience movement: I leave out of account the acts of terrorism that had been committed by the terrorists who committed the murder of three members of the Indian Civil Service, and I also leave out of account all that had happened during the non-co-operation movement. Government have in their possession abundant evidence to show that for some time previous to the adoption by the All-India Congress Committee of the Allahabad resolution on the 8th August, there was something like a network of parallel administration set up in the district of Midnapore——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: We challenge you to prove that.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: If a proper enquiry is made, these things will come out. Well, Sir, there were the Commissioner, the District Magistrate, the Subdivisional Officers, there were the Criminal Investigation Department, the Intelligence Branch, and the Police and so forth of the Congress, and therefore when my friend, Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal, challenges me about the truth or otherwise of what I am now saying, let me remind him that after the 8th August when lawlessness broke out in Midnapore, these police officers of the Congress arrested persons, and the jails of the Congress which were called Gandhi jails were filled with persons arrested by Congress volunteers. And there was evidence to show that many of these persons who called themselves volunteers and the Police Force of the Congress actually committed acts of violence on villagers who resisted their attempt to prevent law and order——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: This is untrue.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am not here to shut other people's mouth: Dr. Sanyal may choose to say what he likes—I do not mind. But I have got to tell the House what the facts actually are, and I say with all the emphasis I can command that the movement broke out with such a ferocity in Midnapore that the local officers had to take aid of the military. It is true that we heard that houses were being burnt, that houses were being looted and all sorts of things regarding oppressions on a few persons. It is not true that we did not call for reports. We did call for reports and we got reports, and while we got reports about what the officers had been doing, we also got reports about what the breakers of law had been doing. We have got evidence that many post offices and police-stations were burnt, people were kidnapped and tortured and some of them

have been kept kidnapped about whom no trace has yet been found. When these things were going on, it is true that strong measures were taken by the local officers. Now, Sir, it has been said that the Ministers were doing nothing, that when houses in Midnapore were burning the Ministers were fiddling their time away in Calcutta. Nobody was fiddling: at that time all the Ministers in batches repeatedly visited Midnapore, but the difficulty was that the lawlessness that was prevailing did not come to an end in order to enable Government to stop the measure that had been adopted to restore law and order. Even now we are receiving reports from various parts of the district that that lawlessness is far from being at an end.

Now, Sir, today speeches have been delivered, and I must confess that the picture that has been drawn by Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal is one of atrocious oppression for which perhaps the history of political lawlessness can hardly afford a parallel. If what Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal has said is correct, if what in detail my friend, Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee has said about Midnapore be correct, if what Mr. Lahiri has said is correct, there is no doubt that horrible oppression has been committed on people by persons who were charged with the duty of maintaining law and order. These charges have been made, but many of the charges have been repudiated by the local officers.

Now, Sir, I hope to give the House some idea of the kind of things that have been happening in Midnapore. I have got a twofold duty to perform. On the one hand if I find that law has been broken, it is my duty to see that proper steps are taken to restore order and tranquillity——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Not by allowing mass rape on innocent women.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Certainly not. On the contrary if in doing so I find that the officials have done nothing more than what is reasonably expected of human beings to do under the circumstances, I shall certainly stand by them and defend them and take the fullest responsibility for what has been done, but at the same time the life and liberty and honour of all men and women must be sacred, and if I find that officers had exceeded their limits, then they have no right to my protection and they should be dealt with in the usual manner.

The question now, Sir, is this. I have placed before the House a brief review of the state of affairs in the district of Midnapore as supplied to me by the local officers. The House will, I hope, realise that whatever might have been the motives that impelled the conduct of a large number of people——

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I must remind the Hon'ble the Chief Minister that he has only two minutes more to finish his statement.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: ——in the district of Midnapore, there was a direct challenge to governmental authority which was conducted on an organised basis unknown at any rate in this province. There may be differences of opinion as to whether the alleged activities on

the part of the organisers of the movement actually took place, but there is no denying the fact that their object was to paralyse civil administration and they succeeded in doing so in at least some areas. I am only giving the substance of what I propose to do and the steps that we propose to take. The local officers had to take the assistance of armed forces to suppress this movement, and it was inevitable that force had been used in order to establish the authority of Government. While it is my duty to place before the House the official version, I also do feel the weight of the universal demand made by the representatives of the people as regards the alleged excesses committed by and under the direction of local officers. I have been particularly distressed to hear of ghastly tales of raid and repression occurring after the cyclone. There is no doubt that public feelings have been deeply stirred by these reports which have emanated from various sources. Let me assure the House that it has never been the policy of this Government either to indulge in excessive use of force for putting down acts of disobedience of law and order or to encourage in any manner acts of lawlessness on the part of Government servants.

I cannot as Home Minister condemn the activities of local officers whose version I have placed before the House for its consideration. I, however, admit that justice demands and, in fact, the very interests of the officers demand that there should be an impartial enquiry into the very serious allegations made regarding the affairs of Midnapore. Government can have no desire to shield anybody in case of any violation of elementary canons of civil administration. At the same time Government must be prepared to give its fullest protection to officials and non-officials alike who have courageously stood by Government during a period of acute stress and strain. I am as anxious to protect all legitimate activities of officers as to protect them from allegations which may, on enquiry, turn out to be unfounded. I am also keen to satisfy the public mind that the rights of the people have not been unduly violated in the course of the administration of the district.

The Ministry therefore agrees that there should be an impartial and independent enquiry conducted by a person or persons enjoying the status of High Court Judges. We are anxious that truth should be ascertained, no matter who would be affected thereby.

I may add that I have got a precedent in this matter in the case of the Punjab Disorders. I remember the Hunter Commission was set up because the matter had assumed an all-India concern. I may say that Midnapore affairs have travelled far beyond the limits of Bengal. When I was in Delhi the other day they asked me anxiously about Midnapore. It is an all-India affair, and we cannot in the face of the allegations that have been made keep silent, and I think it is but due to the officers themselves, if nothing else, that an enquiry should be made as to how far the allegations are true. It is for the officers themselves which has induced us to accept the proposal for an impartial enquiry by persons of eminence of High Court Judges.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: What about stopping future excesses?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I give the fullest assurance that we have already taken the utmost possible measures to prevent excesses of any kind and to see that life, property and honour are properly safeguarded.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I shall begin with the last question which has been put by my honourable friend Dr. Sanyal—What about preventing future excesses? When I last visited Tamluk subdivision of Midnapore that was the question to which I addressed myself. I am glad to tell the House that I have obtained assurances from the Commanding Officer of the regiment which has now come to the Tamluk area that he will see to it that there is no occasion for any allegation against the troops which are now operating in that area. He has definitely stated that he is anxious to establish the best possible relations with the people of the locality and with that end in view he will ensure that nothing but absolutely good and correct conduct will be forthcoming from the troops who are now located there. (Mr. MANINDRA BHUSAN SINGHA: Is he an American or a British officer?) I can give my honourable friend the name of the officer outside the House. I had heart-to-heart talk with the Commanding Officer of the troops who have just replaced the troops in that area. In fact, the troops which were operating in that area were removed on the very day that I came back to Calcutta.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: They have gone out of your control.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: They were never under our control.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Yes, they were for criminal acts within the province

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: So far as that is concerned, if ultimately anything turns out as a result of the enquiry, I am sure the arms of law will be long enough to reach them wherever they may operate within the British Empire.

With regard to the question of relief, that relates to the portfolio of my honourable friend Mr. Banerjee. If he had the time I am sure he would be glad to give a good account of the activities of his department, and I am perfectly sure that the House would have listened with interest and care to what he said.

Adjournment.

The House was then adjourned at 6-40 p.m. till 3-15 p.m. on Tuesday, the 16th February, 1943, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the Provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Tuesday, the 16th February, 1943, at 4 p.m.

Present:

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. SYED JALALUDDIN HASHEMY) in the Chair, 7 Hon'ble Ministers and 102 members.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Realisation of subscription from boat-owners of Couripur, Tippera.

*21. **Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMAD:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Defence) Department be pleased to state the number of country boats—

(1) seized, and

(2) purchased

by the Government under the Defence of India Rules at Couripur Bazar in Tippera?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any subscription was realised from the owners of such boats?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(1) the purpose for which it was spent;

(2) the amount realised for the purpose;

(3) the agency that collected the amount;

(4) whether any receipt was given for the amount collected;

(5) whether any amount was collected without receipt; and

(6) the process adopted in realising the amount?

MINISTER in charge of the HOME DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq): (*a*) (1) and (2) 2,437.

(*b*) Yes, but not by Government officials and not in the boat office.

(*c*) (1) Collected for the newly started Couripur High English School, but not spent as yet.

(2) Rs. 3,248-4.

(3) The Secretary and a member of the Managing Committee.

(4) Yes.

(5) No.

(6) The boat-owners contributed voluntarily.

Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMAD: With reference to answer (*c*) (3), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state who is the Secretary of the Managing Committee of that school?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I cannot say that now. I have not got the name here. I can give the name day after tomorrow.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware of the fact that the contribution realised by Government was at the rate of 10 per cent. paid on account of compensation?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am not aware of that

Mr. SHAHEDALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the Circle Officer of the Rajganj Circle is the Secretary and also a member of the Managing Committee?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I do not know.

Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMAD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, in view of the reply given just now by the Hon'ble Home Minister that he will reply to my supplementary question day after tomorrow, may I suggest that the question be held over

(The question was held over.)

Persons detained under Defence of India Rules after expiry of long terms of imprisonment.

***22. Mr. SATYAPRIYA BANERJEE:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state

(*i*) the number and names of persons who have been detained this year under the Defence of India Rules after the expiry of long terms of imprisonment; and

(*ii*) is the Hon'ble Minister aware that many political prisoners have settled in life without having anything to do with politics after serving long terms of imprisonment?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any chance was given to the persons mentioned in (*a*) to settle in life?

(*c*) If not, will the Hon'ble Minister please explain the reason thereof?

(*d*) Have the Government ascertained their political views before detaining them under the Defence of India Rules.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) (*i*) (1) Ramesh Acharji; (2) Sushil Kumar Bhadra; (3) Panchanan Chakrabartti; (4) Satyabrata Chakrabartti; (5) Ramesh Ch Datta; (6) Kali Kinkar De; (7) Surendra Dhar Chaudhuri; (8) Radha Ballav Gope; (9) Surhid Mallik Chaudhuri; (10) Phani Bhusan Mazumdar; (11) Dibakar Mukharji; (12) Kumud B. Mukharji; (13) Prafulla Narayan Sanyal; (14) Dwijendra Nath Talapatra.

(*ii*) As far as I am aware a few political prisoners have settled in life renouncing politics after serving out long terms of imprisonment.

(*b*) No.

(*c*) They have been detained as security prisoners with a view to preventing them from acting in any manner prejudicial to the defence of British India, the public safety and the maintenance of public order.

(*d*) Yes.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answer (*b*), viz., "no", will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason for coming to this decision? I want to know the reason for not giving them any chance at all while others have been given. You have said in your answer that some persons have actually availed of the opportunity given.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: This is an important question and I shall be grateful if my friend will let me have a regular or even short notice. I will look into the matter and then reply.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: With reference to answer (*c*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what led the Government to think that these persons could act in any manner prejudicial to the defence of British India, the public safety and the maintenance of public order?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The only materials are the reports of the Intelligence Branch Department.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how long did the Intelligence Branch Department get an opportunity of considering that they would act prejudicially?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That is more than I can say. That is a matter of opinion. I cannot say how long

Mr. KIRAN SANKAR ROY: With reference to answer (*d*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how did the Government ascertain their political views?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Machinery at the disposal of Government for ascertaining political activities. This was one kind of material on which the opinion is based and others may be Police information or information of the Intelligence Branch or Special Branch Department.

Family allowance of security prisoner Babu Narendra Nath Das.

***23. Mr. JNANENDRA CHANDRA MAJUMDAR:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether Government have received any petition from security prisoner Babu Narendra Nath Das for the grant of family allowance;

(*ii*) whether the said Babu Narendra Nath Das was a paid employee of the Bengal Publicity Committee under the Bengal Millowners' Association drawing a salary of Rs. 75 per month;

(*ii*) whether he is an M.A. of the Calcutta University and used to earn about Rs.50 a month by private tuition besides the mentioned income;

(*iv*) whether he was the main earning member of his family consisting of about ten members, his father having grown too old to do any work;

(*v*) whether after his arrest the family circumstances have greatly deteriorated bringing the family members to the verge of starvation; and

(*vi*) that the education of his sister had to be discontinued as a result thereof?

(*b*) If the answers to (*a*) are in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is considering the desirability of granting him a family allowance?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) (*i*) Yes.

(*ii*) and (*iii*) Yes, but his exact income from these sources is not known.

(*iv*) and (*vi*) Yes.

(*v*) The circumstances of the family have deteriorated but not to the verge of starvation as the family had other sources of income.

(*b*) A family allowance of Rs.15 per month has been sanctioned with effect from the 1st April, 1942.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any enquiry was made about the exact income of Narendra Nath Das from tuition?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: An enquiry was made on a petition which I received—I forget from whom—not from the honourable member but from some other source and the point was enquired into under the direction of the Subdivisional Officer and the figure has been settled by the department on a consideration of the materials before the Government.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government denies the fact that the said prisoner was in receipt of Rs. 75 per month?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That is the information received by Government.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: So Government denies that?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: On the basis of information received I had to, but if the honourable member has any material to show that the income was Rs. 75 per month I am prepared to consider it.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to tell the House whether any enquiry was made of the Bengal Millowners' Association about Babu Narendra Nath Das's monthly salary and by whom was this enquiry made? What was the status of that officer?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I could not say when the enquiry was made, nor could I say anything about the status of the officer who conducted the enquiry. Perhaps it was done by some Police Officer.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to tell the House whether the Government is ready to make a further enquiry by some responsible officer about the security prisoner's monthly salary and the private tuition fee that he used to get?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Now I remember an enquiry was made under the direction of the Subdivisional Officer. At present I do not think any useful purpose will be served by reopening the question but if the honourable member is sure that a further investigation will lead to a discovery of facts which may justify any increase in the family allowance I shall be glad to do so.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Government will consider the desirability of setting up a Committee of this House to investigate this case and other similar cases where it is said that justice is not being done to these people?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That is also a question of policy. If the honourable member thinks that such a course should be adopted the matter should be brought to the notice of Government and there must be a decision of Government. I cannot say off-hand on behalf of Government whether such a course would be adopted

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: If the Government are not prepared to deny the fact that the security prisoner was in receipt of Rs. 75 per month as salary and about Rs. 50 as private tuition fee and when it is admitted that circumstances have deteriorated, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state on what basis the paltry sum of Rs. 15 was allowed to his family?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: In view of the question that has been put I promise to look into the question again.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how much rice will his family get for this Rs. 15?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I have already said that I shall look into this question again.

Starred Question No. 24.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: As regards starred question No. 24, I respectfully submit that in answer (*a*) (*i*) and (*b*) the Hon'ble Minister has referred me to the provisions of rule 22 of the Bengal Security Prisoners Rules, a copy of which, it is said, is placed in the Library, but a copy has not been placed on the Library table.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: The question has not been answered yet. But I may make the position clear. The answer states that a copy is placed in the Library. I have taken that Library copy out. I beg to submit for your consideration that a member is entitled to take out books from the Library. I find from this book that it is not an up-to-date copy. It is an old copy and not an up-to-date corrected copy of the Security Prisoners Rules and if the Hon'ble Minister has based his answer on this he will be entirely misled. Therefore let him withdraw the question and then see that an up-to-date copy of Security Prisoners Rules is placed on the Library table.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Sir, I would submit that every member of this House is entitled to a corrected copy of the rules. On top it is printed "for official use". If we are officers of the Legislative Assembly we are perfectly entitled to a copy. Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he will be good enough to supply each of us with a copy?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I cannot answer that just now.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: I suggest that the question may be held over for the present.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Yes, I have no objection.

(Starred question No. 24 was held over.)

Levy of collective fines in Bengal.

***25. Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) in how many places in Bengal the Government has imposed collective fines, and

(*ii*) the amount imposed and realised in each place?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister consider the desirability of withdrawing all the orders of collective fines all over Bengal?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) (*i*) I refer the honourable member to the following notifications published in the *Calcutta Gazette*:—

Sir, is it necessary that I should read all these notifications? I suggest that they may be taken as read.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: It is our business to see that the list is read out. The Hon'ble Minister would like to evade the question by quoting a number of notifications.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: They would form part of the proceedings.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: If you agree that things that are printed and circulated might be part of the proceedings, we will also claim the same privilege. Government cannot have any special privileges in this House. Here all members are in the same position.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: The question is in how many places in Bengal the Government has imposed collective fines. Instead of giving a definite reply, the Hon'ble Minister has cited a number of notifications published in the *Calcutta Gazette*.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: What should I do?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: This question and other questions on the same subject that have been given notice of may be taken up on the same day.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I take it that there will be no supplementary questions.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: That depends on the answer you give.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is held over.

Cars and lorries seized by Government.

*28. **Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Home (Transport) Department be pleased to state the number of cars and lorries that have been seized by the Government under Defence of India Rules?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the owners of those lorries and cars were given compensation, and if so, on what basis?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: (*a*) The information, which is not readily available, is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House in due course

(*b*) Yes. The amount of compensation is based on the type, year of make and general condition of the vehicle.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what are the principles followed in requisitioning private cars and lorries by Government? Are there any principles laid down?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I must agree that up till now the requisitioning of buses and lorries and cars has proceeded on somewhat haphazard lines. For the purpose of remedying that state of affairs, new instructions have been issued which I would like to indicate before the House. The existing system has been recognised to have been haphazard and to have needed rationalisation. It is now agreed that the following order should be adopted in the requisitioning of vehicles. First of all a comb out should be made of cases (*a*) where the owners possess

more than one car, (*b*) where the owners possess one or more cars and a motor bi-cycle, and (*c*) where cars have been laid up without a permit until the restoration of basic rations recently.

The Deputy Commissioner, Public Vehicles Department, is arranging to make out cases under the first two categories and for the issue of notices in such cases. A list of those under the last category can also be obtained from appropriate quarters. Requisitioning for the present will be confined to these 3 classes of cases and after the first two categories are exhausted the third category will ordinarily be taken up

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if his department has received any complaint regarding the discriminatory treatment in favour of Europeans and Anglo-Indians in the matter of requisitioning of cars?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I am not aware whether any complaints have been received or not but it is possible that in case of haphazard requisitioning some amount of discrimination might have been made though not on racial grounds.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state to-day or on any subsequent date the number of cars belonging to Europeans and Anglo-Indians in Calcutta requisitioned as compared with the number of cars and lorries belonging to Indian owners?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I shall try to find out, if possible.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if we are to assume that under the new revised scheme the owners of motor cars and lorries who have only one car will not have their cars requisitioned?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I cannot go so far as that, but I may say that in order of priority such owners of one car ought to come last.

Mr. P. BANERJI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the cars of the members of the Legislature of both Houses will be exempted from requisition?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: If these cars come under any of the categories mentioned by me, they will be exempted in accordance with the scheme.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is Government considering the desirability of keeping the cars belonging to members of the Calcutta Corporation and of this Legislature free from requisition for the time being?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: It is a very valuable suggestion, and I shall certainly look into it.

Mr. ANANDILAL PODDAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that no harmony is being observed in respect of vehicles for which payments have not been made up till now and also whether Government is going to pay the hire-money now?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I am not in a position to answer that question offhand.

Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: With reference to answer (*b*), has the Hon'ble Minister scrutinised the amounts allotted as compensation to be awarded to different districts?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: This is more or less a technical matter, apd I haves not scrutinised the list or the schedule.

Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state who was empowered to give compensation?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: That work has been entrusted to an officer who is known as Civil Transport Officer.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state as to who is the person or the authority that assesses the values of the cars?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: The Civil Transport Officer.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if that officer has the power to delegate the power of assessment to any other officer?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I do not think so, but there may be persons to help him in making assessments.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that the Civil Transport Officer is assisted by somebody who has had technical knowledge of assessing the value of these cars?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I think that is the position.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that serious complaints have often been made against that officer about wrong valuation which are not always justifiable on grounds of the original value and depreciation?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I am afraid I am not in a position to answer a general question of that nature.

Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: Who is the Civil Transport Officer in the mofussil?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I want notice.

Non-Agricultural Tenancy Bill.

*27. **Babu KSHETRA NATH SINCHA:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department aware that the Bengal Non-Agricultural Tenancy (Temporary Provisions) Extending Act expires in 1943?

(*b*) If so, do the Government intend to bring in a permanent legislation?

MINISTER in charge of the REVENUE and JUDICIAL DEPARTMENTS (the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) Yes, as soon as possible. Meanwhile steps are being taken to extend the terms of the Bengal Non-Agricultural Tenancy (Temporary Provisions) Act, 1940, for a further period.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what further period is contemplated in this answer?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: So far as I remember it will be just a period of one year.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that considerable dislocation has been caused to the owners and others who propose to build new houses during this temporary deadlock in the province regarding tenancy in non-agricultural land?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I am not aware of the fact mentioned by my honourable friend. There may be difficulties but my answer is, times are also abnormal.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that due to the present emergencies there has been a large influx of population into urban areas in the mofussil where this Non-Agricultural Tenancy Act applies?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I can visualise the difficulties but I have told the House that every effort is being made to expedite bringing forward of this important piece of legislation as soon as time permits.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Is it a fact that the Act is going to expire on the 29th May, 1943?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: The answer is in the affirmative.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: In view of that answer and the subsequent answer to starred question No. 28(*b*), may we know, Sir, when this piece of legislation will be brought forward?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: As I have already stated, as soon as possible, but the exact date I cannot give at present to the House.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: In view of the fact that the present temporary Act expires in May, 1943, is the Hon'ble Minister prepared to admit that there would be confusion if no legislation was immediately taken up by Government?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: The temporary provision, as I have stated, will be extended for a further period of one year. That will give *status quo ante bellum*.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister consider the desirability of introducing a short Bill to that effect in this session of the Assembly?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: The answer is in the affirmative

Maulana MD. ABDUL AZIZ: কতবার এরূপ extensions আর দেবেন ?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I have not asked for more extensions than one.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: With reference to answer (*b*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Government policy is to shelve the Bill?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I cannot accept that suggestion of my honourable friend.

Legislation on Non-Agricultural Tenancy.

*28. **Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state when the Non-Agricultural Tenancy regarding temporary provision Act will expire?

(*b*) Do the Government contemplate to introduce permanent legislation on Non-Agricultural Tenancy in this (Budget) session of the Assembly?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he made a definite promise at the time of extending the period of Non-Agricultural Tenancy Temporary Provisions Act that he will put the permanent legislation on Non-Agricultural Tenancy upon the statute book before the expiration of the period of the temporary provision Act?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: (*a*) On the 29th May, 1943.

(*b*) No.

(*c*) The assurance is contained in Assembly proceedings for 1942, page 153.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: With reference to answer (*c*), in which the Hon'ble Minister admits that an assurance was given to this House that permanent legislation would be introduced before he asked for

another extension, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that Government have no intention of giving effect to the assurance given to this House?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: My honourable friend's question is based upon a wrong premise. The assurance was "as soon as possible"

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: With reference to answer (*b*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what was the difficulty that stood in the way of the Hon'ble Minister in introducing a permanent legislation during the current session?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: One of the difficulties will be the extent of time at disposal. The current session of the Legislature will perhaps come to an end some day in April—I hope not on the 1st of April, 1943. It is impossible to pass a legislation of this magnitude within this period.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister give this House a clear idea whether he has any intention to implement the assurance referred to in answer (*c*)?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: My statement about the clarity of the idea will not satisfy my friend. I have said repeatedly that I shall certainly take steps to bring forward this measure as early as possible

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: The assurance given was that legislation would be brought forward before the expiration of the Temporary Provisions Act That was the clear assurance and that is what is referred to in answer (*c*). My question is whether Government intend to implement the assurance.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Whatever assurance I have given before this House I have certainly implemented and there will not be an exception in this case.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether he made a definite promise at the time of extending the period of the Non-Agricultural Tenancy Temporary Provisions Act that he will put a permanent legislation on non-agricultural tenancy upon the statute-book before the expiration of the period of the Temporary Provisions Act? That assurance is contained in Assembly proceedings of 1942, page 153.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: What is your question?

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: The assurance given was to the effect that legislation would be brought before the period of the present Temporary Provisions Act expired. Now I want to know whether he intends to implement that assurance.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: My honourable friend knows that if I agreed with the suggestion contained in the question, the answer would have been that the answer is in the affirmative. Therefore he will be good enough to look into the Assembly proceedings for 1942, page 153, and the suggestion contained in question 28(*c*). There is a difference.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state now what the exact assurance was?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I have stated it already and I have nothing further to add.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state what stood in the way of bringing a permanent legislation?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I have given the answer already.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: With reference to answer (*c*), the original Temporary Provisions Bill was to have been extended for two years, but the Hon'ble Minister reduced the extension to one year with the promise that a Bill would be brought in before the expiration of the Temporary Provisions Act, that is within one year of the extension. Will the Hon'ble Minister please state if it is not the fact?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I have already answered the question.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister please tell the House how long this question of non-agricultural tenancy legislation is before the Council of Ministers?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: My honourable friend should be more specific. There is a Council of Ministers, but does he refer to the present Council of Ministers or its predecessor?

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: I mean the Council of Ministers formed under the Government of India Act, 1935.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I am not able to answer it.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: With reference to answer (*b*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any Bill has been drafted and whether he intends to publish it in the *Calcutta Gazette* within this month or the next month?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: The Bill is in draft. I cannot give the assurance mentioned in the second part of the question.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the draft has been approved by the Cabinet as a whole?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I am afraid, Sir, I am unable to answer that question.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Does the Hon'ble Minister fear to act according to the dictates of his conscience because he thinks that he would thereby alienate the support of some of his supporters?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: That question does not arise and conscience is a commodity which is not the monopoly of my learned friend

Starred Question No. 29.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, I will ask your leave to withdraw the answer and I will give the answer some other day.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The answer will be given later on

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Does it lie with the Government to withdraw an answer that is placed before us?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The answer will be given soon. Mr Banerjee, are you in a position to state when you can give the answer?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Next week.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Why is the answer withdrawn? Is it because it is a stupid answer?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Suhrawardy, I will again request you to use decorum in your language.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: May we know the reason why this question is withdrawn, because this is a question which vitally affects the people. Government cannot play with this important question in this way and it is, Sir, your business as the custodian of the House to see that Government do not play joke with the House by introducing a question and then withdrawing it

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have given my consent to withdraw it. You will get a proper answer within a week.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Sir, we want your ruling whether Government can withdraw an answer after it has been placed before the House

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, they can withdraw.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Are we to assume that the reply that was given by Government was improper and they are withdrawing it so that they can rectify their mistake?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: In the light of new development the Hon'ble Minister is entitled to change the answer. I do not say that the answer is wrong. I am not supposed to know whether the answer is wrong or not. Possibly he will give a better answer; so he has withdrawn it.

Preparation of rules of the Money Lenders Act, 1939.

***30. Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH SEN:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Judicial Department be pleased to state whether any rules have been framed setting forth the conditions regarding the Notified Banks under the Bengal Money Lenders Act, 1940 (Act X of 1940)?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons for the delay?

(*c*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when he intends to place the rules before the House?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: (*a*) Draft rules are under preparation.

(*b*) Delay is due to the state of emergency prevailing in the Province

(*c*) The rules will be placed before the House as early as possible.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answer (*b*), namely, "Delay is due to the state of emergency prevailing in the province", will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the Japanese stood in the way of drafting these rules?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: No; Japanese bombing.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: What emergency is referred to here?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: My honourable friend knows full well about the emergency prevailing in the province including the declaration of a state of emergency by the Government itself.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it would be possible for him to place the rules before the House during the current session of the Assembly?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I hope so.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that certain draft rules have already been prepared and largely approved of by the representatives of different sections of this House?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Draft rules were certainly prepared, and the last conference I had with representatives of different parties of the House was in the earlier part of this month.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: The Hon'ble Minister stated that the emergency on account of the Japanese bombing stood in the way. Are we to assume that on account of this bombing all the Ministers had to run away from Calcutta?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Ministers do not run away. Some honourable members do.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how many of them were present at the time of the bombing and whether he was present?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Certainly myself and almost all of my colleagues were present.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how many of the khaki clad members stayed in Calcutta during the last air raids?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I do not know, but certainly not my honourable friend, the questioner. (Laughter.)

Removal of Water-hyacinth.

***31. Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA:** (*a*) With reference to the reply given to supplementary questions of starred question No. 294 on the 25th March, 1938, will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture, Co-Operative Credit and Rural Indebtedness Department be pleased to state whether any reply has since been received from the Railway authorities?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to lay on the Table copies of the relevant portions of the correspondence?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what action have the Government taken to acquire power over the Railway and the Local Bodies for removal of the pest from lands in their possession?

(*d*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) what actions have since been taken against zemindars for enforcing the Water Hyacinth Act;

(*ii*) the number of prosecutions, if any, made in enforcing the Act;

(*iii*) the number of cases that have been tried in the courts;

(*iv*) the number of such cases that ended in conviction;

(*v*) the maximum and minimum punishment inflicted; and

(*vi*) the amount that have been spent in each of the years—

1938-39,
1939-40,
1940-41, and
1941-42

for the removal of the pest—

(1) for the District of Faridpur as a whole, and

(2) for the subdivision of Goalundo?

(e) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the principle followed for the removal of the pest from the district?

(f) Do the Government contemplate to make any change in their principle?

MINISTER in charge of the CO-OPERATIVE CREDIT and RURAL INDEBTEDNESS DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Hashem Ali Khan): *(a)* and *(b)* No; but in response to the request made the Railway authorities cleared the railway ditches within the Goalundo subdivision during the last Water-hyacinth Week in February, 1942. It is reported that the cleared areas have again been filled up with the pest.

(c) Under the Bengal Water Hyacinth Act, 1936, Railways and local bodies may be directed by District Magistrates to clear water-hyacinth from land or water in their possession. Failing compliance orders may be issued by District Magistrates to take up the work by the agency of the district staff and to recover the cost from the parties concerned.

(d) *(i)* No special action was taken against zemindars. Notices were issued on them on many occasions for removal of water-hyacinth from their lands and they invariably responded and rendered pecuniary help and extended their co-operation for removal of the pest.

(ii) 204.

(iii) 203; one case pending.

(iv) One; others let off with warning.

(v) A fine of Rs.25, in default simple imprisonment for two weeks.

	Year	For the district.	For Goalundo subdivision.
		Rs.	Rs.
(vi)	1938-39	1,770	360
	1939-40	2,482	693
	1940-41	4,100	1,000
	1941-42	16,366	4,450

(e) It is the policy of Government to tackle the problem of the eradication of water-hyacinth in the first instance on a voluntary basis without recourse to coercive action under the Bengal Water Hyacinth Act. It is only when there is no response that legal action for the compulsory clearance of water-hyacinth is taken.

(f) No.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: With reference to answer *(a)* and *(b)*, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether actually a letter was addressed and, if so, when?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: A letter was addressed and the last reply received from the District Magistrate, Faridpur, was dated 8th December, 1942. No reply has been received from the Railway authorities.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: With reference to answer (*d*)(*iii*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if in any of these cases persons were let off on receipt of certain amounts for certain purposes?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I do not know.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is it a fact that in a very large number of cases where persons were accused and subsequently let off they were compelled to contribute certain amounts to certain funds started by the local officials?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I do not know.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister consider the desirability of making an enquiry into the matter?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Yes, certainly

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: With reference to answer (*d*)(*i*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what kind of pecuniary help was received and where was it credited?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I want notice.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that money was realised but it did not serve the purpose of clearing water-hyacinth? Is that a fact?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: No. I do not know.

Babu KSHETRA NATH SINGHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how many zemindars were prosecuted?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I cannot give the details without notice.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Is it a fact that the zemindars were in the suit and only in some cases the tenants against their will were compelled in the name of the authorities to make clearance of water-hyacinth and no effective action was taken?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: No, Sir. I do not know.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister make an enquiry with regard to the allegations that have been made?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Yes.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: With reference to answer (*f*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is satisfied with the success of the present scheme with regard to the removal of water-hyacinth?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: *Of course* in some districts it has been successful.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if I am wrong to suggest that the condition has become worse since 1938—rather it is in a very bad condition now?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I will hold an enquiry.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if, in view of the lacuna known and found under which local officials can abuse the provisions of this Act, Government is considering the desirability of making suitable amendments to the Act?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: If we receive any suggestion which may help in stopping the dishonest methods adopted by the officers or their misconduct, I will certainly consider that question.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: With reference to answer "no" in (*f*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he considers it desirable to hold an enquiry as to why the action so far taken has not been of an effective character so far as the clearance of water-hyacinth was concerned?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: I do not think that the principle adopted is not successful. What I suggested was that Government was not willing to take coercive action at the first stage, if voluntary action failed. There is a provision of law. The District Magistrate can take action; he can get the water-hyacinth cleared off and money can be realised from the parties concerned. There is a clear provision.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(answers to which were laid on the table)

Nomination in Nator Municipality.

9. Kazi ABUL MASUD: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) who are the present nominated members of the Nator Municipality; and

(*ii*) whether any of them was candidate for election to the said municipality?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*ii*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the result of their election?

(*c*) Is it a fact that those who have failed to come through election have been nominated as members of the said municipality?

(*d*) If the answer to (*c*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason therefor?

MINISTER in charge of the PUBLIC HEALTH and LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu): (*a*)(*i*) Maulvi Kamaruzzaman Amin, Khan Sahib Maulvi Md. Mazhar Ali Shah, Maulvi Md. Isaruddin Talukdar and Babu Gopendra Prasad Sukul.

(*ii*) Three of them stood as candidates for election.

(*b*) One of them withdrew, one was defeated and the third was absent from the municipality at the time of the election and did not contest it.

(*c*) A defeated candidate was nominated.

(*d*) There is no hard and fast rule that under no circumstances a defeated candidate should be appointed. The general principle followed in making nominations is to secure the association in the administration of the local bodies of persons specially fitted in the opinion of Government for appointment as members of these bodies.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: With reference to answer (*d*) where the Hon'ble Minister says that there is no hard and fast rule that under no circumstances a defeated candidate should be appointed, is there any hard and fast rule promulgated by the Ministry that only persons who have been defeated in the election and who do not enjoy the confidence of the public should be nominated to positions of responsibility?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Certainly not.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Is there any hard and fast rule that the majority of nominations should go to the defeated candidates and to those who do not enjoy the confidence of the public?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Wholly incorrect.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Why has the Hon'ble Minister nominated persons who do not enjoy the confidence of the public? Is it because he and his party and his Ministry do not enjoy the confidence of the public?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That question does not arise.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: The Hon'ble Minister appoints members of his own party as he himself does not enjoy the confidence of the public.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: The honourable member might indulge in any aspersions he likes to suit his own convenience.

Kazi ABUL MASUD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is aware of the fact that the deposit money of Babu Gopendra Prasad Sukul was forfeited and yet he has been nominated?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: *Babu Gopendra Prasa* Sukul filed his application and deposited his money from Lucknow. Bu owing to illness he could neither attend the election, nor withdraw th application in time. That is the reason why his security deposit wa forfeited.

Kazi ABUL MASUD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to stat whether Babu Gopendra Prasad Sukul is the Chairman of Nator Municipality?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Very likely.

Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMED: Will the Hon'ble Minister b pleased to state if the fortunate defeated candidate who has been nominated belongs to the Progressive Coalition Party?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Who is the fortunate defeated candidate who has been nominated?

Mr. M. A. H. ISPAHANI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased t state what prompted him to nominate defeated candidates?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I have not appointed defeated candidates almost in 95 per cent. of the nominations up till now But so far as one or two cases are concerned, in every case there has been a very good reason. So far as Nator is concerned, these gentlemen have been declared to be very popular in the particular locality

Mr. M. A. H. ISPAHANI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased t state whether any candidate gains popularity by getting defeated at the election?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I have already said that in the case of Babu Gopendra Prasad Sukul he was away at Lucknow and did not at all contest the election and his defeat was only a technical defeat.

Adjournment Motion.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Sir, I beg to move——

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: As you know, the convention is that on the day on which the budget is presented no other business is transacted. I shall waive the question of urgency and you may bring it up any day next week.

Left over Questions.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: We were assured yesterday that the questions which were held over would be taken up today. Are you not going to take them today?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, not today. Further the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. Abdul Karim is not here.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: The Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur is here. The questions which were not taken up because of his absence might be taken up today.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: The Hon'ble Mr Shamsuddin Ahmed is here. He said that unstarred question No. 1 would be taken up today.

The Hon'ble Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: I am ready with my papers, but I think it may be taken up on Monday.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It will be taken up on Monday.

BUDGET OF THE GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL, 1943-44.

Budget Statement.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I rise to present the Budget for the year 1943-44.

The war has come very close indeed to Bengal since Dr. Mookerjee presented the Budget for 1942-43 a year ago. After the fall of Singapore the flood of Japanese aggression swept through Burma up to the very borders of Bengal, cutting us off from those fertile plains that have for so long served as a reserve rice granary for this Province and from the wells from which we drew the bulk of the oil for our lamps. For months an unending stream of refugees in the last extremities of distress and destitution brought home to the people of this Province the ruthlessness of war. For a time enemy warships closed the Bay to all but a meagre trickle of shipping and in the air Chittagong, Feni and more recently Calcutta have been bombed.

In spite of all, and although the enemy is still entrenched just beyond our southern border, there is none, I make bold to say, who does not face the future with greater confidence than a year ago. That confidence is a compound of many factors: the magnificent feats of the Red Army from Leningrad to the Caucasus, the smashing victory of the Eighth Army in Libya and Tripolitania, the occupation by an Allied force of several hundred miles of the coast of North Africa, the halting of the tide of aggression in the South-West Pacific and, nearer home, the outstanding successes of the R.A.F. against night raiders.

The ever mounting scale of the operations based on this Province has given rise to many novel and complex problems. Normal trade channels have been seriously disorganised: military demands on rail and river-borne transport have involved the most drastic curtailment of the volume of traffic available for civil requirements and contributed materially to the difficulties of the supply situation: circumstances have compelled Government to enter into hitherto untrodden fields and the activities of the newly formed and rapidly expanding Directorate of Civil Supplies seem likely to entail very heavy outlays from provincial revenues and to be of such a nature that on their success will depend very largely the welfare of the Province throughout the coming year. It would be the height of folly to think that one could change overnight and without confusion from the haphazard distribution of

peace-time plenty to a system of distribution that aims at the most equitable and economical use of the supplies available. I shall revert to this subject later.

I shall conclude these prefatory observations by a brief reference to two events, not connected with the war, which have affected our Budget for the current year. The first of these is the campaign of sabotage and hooliganism initiated in August last after the arrest of the Congress leaders. All right thinking men must deplore and condemn the loss of national assets which this campaign involved and the spirit of lawlessness which it sought to engender. It imposed a heavy burden on the administration at a time when the tension due to the menace of hostile aggression was already acute. It is satisfactory to note that Government servants met the situation with courage and resolution. The Police in particular rose nobly to the occasion and have to their credit many conspicuous acts of devotion to duty. Except in the district of Midnapore the movement was speedily brought under control, but not without substantial extra expenditure in the quelling of disturbances and the rounding up of culprits.

The other event to which I must refer is the devastating cyclone and flood which swept over the districts of Midnapore and 24-Parganas in the middle of October last. The area affected by this disaster was some 3,400 square miles with a population of nearly 25 lakhs. About twenty per cent. of the area was laid almost completely waste; fifty per cent. suffered severely and the rest has been affected to a smaller extent. Mortality both among men and cattle was extremely heavy. It is estimated that nearly 60 lakhs will be required for relief operations and about 70 lakhs for agricultural loans to cultivators in the affected areas. A further item of extra expenditure is the cost of repairs to irrigation embankments swept away by the flood, which it is estimated will cost some 30 lakhs.

Let me now turn to the accounts for 1941-42.

In our Revised Estimates for that year we had expected to end with a revenue deficit of a crore and 3 lakhs. The actual deficit turned out to be 56 lakhs only. This improvement of 47 lakhs was due mainly to the slowing down of expenditure in the closing months of the year. Outside the Revenue Account the surplus of a crore and 8 lakhs forecast in the Revised proved in actual working to be 78 lakhs only—a worsening of 30 lakhs. This was because the A.R.P. advance from the Centre which it had been assumed would be 75 lakhs turned out to be 44 lakhs only on the basis of the expenditure actually incurred. The combined effect of the improvement of 47 lakhs in the Revenue Section and the deterioration of 30 lakhs outside it was to raise the closing balance by 17 lakhs. According to the Revised our closing balance was to have been a crore and 15 lakhs. The actual closing balance stood at a crore and 32 lakhs.

Our indebtedness at the close of the year stood at a crore and 44 lakhs out of which 1 crore was on account of Treasury Bills and the balance on account of the A.R.P. advance from the Centre.

Let me now pass on to the Revised Estimate for the current year.

According to the Budget Estimate the year was to start with an opening balance of a crore and 15 lakhs and to end with a closing balance of 79 lakhs. The Revised Estimate places the opening balance at a crore and 32 lakhs and the closing balance at a crore and 54 lakhs. Revenue Receipts are expected to be 2 lakhs lower than the original estimate and expenditure on revenue account is likely to exceed the Budget figure by 46 lakhs. Outside the Revenue Account the Budget provided for a surplus of 70 lakhs, but according to the Revised there will be a surplus of a crore and 76 lakhs—an improvement of a crore and 6 lakhs

The increase of 75 lakhs in the closing balance is thus the net result of the following variations:—

an increase of 17 lakhs in the opening balance;

a decrease of 2 lakhs in Revenue which coupled with an increase of 46 lakhs in expenditure means a total worsening of 48 lakhs in the Revenue Section; and

finally, an improvement of a crore and 6 lakhs in the section outside the Revenue Account.

Let me now give a brief account of each of these changes.

The opening balance adopted in the Revised is the actual closing balance of the preceding year.

Under Revenue receipts, although the total estimate adopted in the Revised approximates very closely to that in the Budget, there have been substantial variations under certain important heads. The heads which have served us much better than we expected are Income Tax, Excise and Forest while the heads which have let us down are Land Revenue, Stamps and Other Taxes and Duties. Under Income Tax the yield is expected to be 39 lakhs above our original estimate. Excise receipts are up by 48 lakhs. This is attributable to the larger consumption of country liquor as a result of the influx into this Province of large numbers of non-Bengalee labourers, evacuees and camp followers addicted to liquor. Forest Revenue is likely to improve by 11 lakhs. About half of this is attributable to the general improvement in the timber market and the remainder is the result of special orders from the Supply Department which were not foreseen at the Budget stage. Against these improvements totalling 98 lakhs there has to be set off a worsening of an almost equivalent amount made up of 15 lakhs under Land Revenue, 25 lakhs under Stamps and 57 lakhs under Other Taxes and Duties. The decline under Land Revenue is due to flood, cyclone and adverse economic factors. The decrease under Stamps is shared equally between "Court fees" and "Non-Judicial Stamps". The decline under "Court fees" is due to the working of Debt Conciliation Boards and consequent reduction in civil litigation. That under "Non-Judicial Stamps" is due to the unsettled conditions of trade.

The decline of 57 lakhs under "Other Taxes and Duties" is the sum total of a drop of 40 lakhs under Sales Tax, 12 lakhs under the Raw Jute Tax and 7 lakhs under Electricity Duty compensated to a very slight extent by a small increase under taxes on betting and entertainment.

In regard to the Sales Tax the House is aware that this is the first year in which the Act has been in operation throughout the whole twelve months and our original estimate was necessarily very largely a matter of guess work. This estimate may have been on the high side even for normal conditions of trade but there is no doubt that the receipts have been very seriously affected by the reduction of private sales of building materials and imported goods. The short fall in receipts under the Raw Jute Taxation Act is due chiefly to the exemption provided in section 3(3) of the Act of purchases made under contracts entered into before the date of the commencement of the Act. The drop under Electricity Duty was only to be expected in view of the rigid enforcement of lighting restrictions.

In regard to expenditure on Revenue Account, the increase of 46 lakhs, constituting as it does less than 3 per cent. of the original estimate of 16¾ crores, may not at first sight seem to call for much explanation. Although, however, the net result is inconsiderable it is the effect of very substantial variations under certain heads.

Broadly speaking, the variations consist of an increase of about 50 lakhs under "Famine relief", 32 lakhs under "Extraordinary charges", 20 lakhs on account of dearness allowance spread over almost all heads, and 12 lakhs under "Police", set off by a decrease of 44 lakhs under "Civil works", 10 lakhs under "Education", and 10 lakhs under "Public Health". The figures in respect of "Police", "Civil works", "Education", and "Public Health" are exclusive of dearness allowance which has been separately accounted for in the foregoing enumeration. I shall now give a brief account of each of these variations.

I have already referred to the heavy financial burden thrown upon the Province as a result of the devastation caused by the recent cyclone and flood. The expenditure during the current year will be of the order of 50 lakhs; this amount is required for gratuitous relief and allied measures for the alleviation of distress. Large-scale agricultural loans have also been issued, but these are adjusted outside the Revenue section of the Budget.

The increase under "Extraordinary charges" represents the cost of special measures designed to meet the exigencies of the War situation. A little less than half of it is due to the entertainment of additional police for the protection of vulnerable areas. The remainder is due to the creation of a Directorate of Civil Supplies, the organisation of Home Guards, the grant of separation and other allowances in non-family areas, and increased expenditure on Civil Transport.

I have already referred briefly to the activities of the Directorate of Civil Supplies. Hard things have been said and written regarding the Directorate and in due course the Minister-in-charge will have an opportunity of replying in detail to the Department's critics. This afternoon I merely wish to summarise very briefly what has been done and what remains to be done and to emphasise the magnitude and complexity of the task to which we have set our hands.

By July last it had become abundantly clear that the fixation of maximum prices by law was no solution of our problem; the effect was to drive supplies underground—or to what is popularly referred to as "the black market". The control of prices could not be made effective without control of supplies. Accordingly a new Department, the Directorate of Civil Supplies, was set up. One great handicap the new Department has had to face is shortage of trained staff. It has had to set up a new province-wide organisation with raw untrained material or such officers as could be spared from other Departments in which work had been deliberately slowed down as a war measure. But in any case control of supplies cannot be obtained in a day. I am told that in the last war it took England over a year to obtain it effectively. In less than six months we have with the co-operation of the Government of India reached a position where we are assured of actual control of all supplies of imported wheat and *dal*; of domestic coal; of sugar; and, thanks to the co-operation of the Oil Companies, of kerosene.

Now that control of the supplies of these commodities is assured, we can turn to the problem of effective distribution. A start has been made and the Distributing Trades Tribunal whose functions have been publicly explained, is a guarantee that the selection of main distributors will be impartial and businesslike. The strictness of our control over distribution must be proportionate to the degree of stringency in supply.

In the case of rice the struggle for control of supplies at fair prices is still continuing and our success will depend in large measure on the realisation by all concerned, from cultivator to consumer, that we mean business and are determined to put a stop to profiteering. During the past six months while we have been negotiating, persuading and fighting for effective control of supplies, we have had to deal with repeated emergencies as best we could; much as it has gone against the grain, we have had to temporise with profiteers and speculators in order to keep supplies going. That phase we hope and believe is coming to an end as our plans for securing control of supplies begin to bear fruit.

The cost of the Directorate during the current year is estimated at 4½ lakhs. An advance of 50 lakhs has recently been placed at the disposal of the Directorate for the purchase of foodstuffs. This amount will be adjusted in the Debt Deposit Section of the Budget.

The increase of 20 lakhs under "Dearness allowance" spread over different heads of expenditure, represents the additional relief granted to employees on moderate pay in order to mitigate the hardship caused by the abnormal rise in the cost of living. Details of the measure of relief, sanctioned from time to time, will be found in the Foreword to the Red Book.

Out of the increase of 12 lakhs under Police about 4½ lakhs is due to the reorganisation of Civic Guards with a view to improve their efficiency and a further 5 lakhs to the grant of the Police emergency areas bonus to the subordinate ranks. The remainder of the increase is due to a variety of factors such as higher cost of materials and extra transport for improving the mobility of the force.

Among other items of additional expenditure included in the revised there are two which call for individual mention. The first is the scheme for the improvement of food production.

In an attempt to replace the rice Bengal used to obtain from Burma and generally to ensure adequate supplies of food Government launched the "Grow More Food" campaign in the beginning of the current year. Vigorous propaganda for increasing the acreage under cultivation was followed by the purchase and distribution of improved varieties of paddy, mustard, lentil and potato seed. Seeds of various kinds of vegetables and cuttings of sugarcane were also distributed. The outlay on this project is estimated at 18¾ lakhs but a considerable part of it—about 10 lakhs—is expected to be recovered.

The second scheme deals with measures for the control of vagrancy. The House will recall that a provision of 2 lakhs was included in the current year's Budget for a special interest-free advance to facilitate arrangements for the removal of beggars from Calcutta pending the allocation of financial responsibility among the parties concerned. Detailed examination of the proposal, however, made it clear that if the scheme were to be put into operation within a reasonable time it would have to be taken up directly by Government in the first instance, the question of financial liability being left over for decision later on. Considerable difficulty was experienced in the selection of a suitable site and later in obtaining the necessary building materials. The site finally selected is at Mahalandi in the district of Murshidabad where the construction of buildings designed to accommodate 5,000 vagrants has already commenced. The cost of this scheme as now worked out stands at a capital outlay of 13 lakhs and a recurring annual expenditure of 9 lakhs. The high cost is due to the abnormal rise in the price of building materials, clothing and foodstuff. It is anticipated that the outlay in the current year will be 6½ lakhs.

The increase on account of these and other small items of additional expenditure is offset by minor decreases under other heads.

The heads which are responsible for the more substantial reductions are, as already stated, Civil Works, Education and Public Health. The decrease under Civil Works is due to slowing down of both road and building work partly by design and partly owing to the non-availability of materials. Under Education the decrease is due to smaller grants to those District School Boards which have accumulated large balances. Under Public Health the decrease is due to the dearth of tube-well materials which made it impossible to utilise the Water Supply grants to any great extent.

It remains now to explain the improvement of a crore and six lakhs in the Debt Deposit Section of the Budget. This improvement is due to a loan of 2½ crores granted to us by the Government of India for Ways and Means purposes. The effect of this much-needed addition to our balance has unfortunately been largely neutralised by the issue of one crore of agricultural loans in excess of the normal precautionary provision included in the budget and by an advance of 50 lakhs to the Directorate of Civil Supplies for the

purchase of food grains; with the result that we have had to ask the Central Government to extend the period for which this loan was made for a further twelve months.

The estimated closing balance at the end of the current year is, as already stated, a crore and 54 lakhs. This, however, includes nearly 4 crores of borrowed money made up as follows:—

Ways and Means advance ...	2 crores 50 lakhs
A.R.P. advance outstanding in respect of 1941-42 ..	35 lakhs
Civil Defence advance in the current year .	1 crore 10 lakhs
Total	3 crores 95 lakhs

I now take up the estimates for 1943-44.

The year starts with an opening balance of a crore and fifty-four lakhs, which, as I have already explained, is the anticipated closing balance for the current year. Revenue Receipts are placed at 16 crores and 2 lakhs, or 34 lakhs higher than the Revised The estimate of expenditure on Revenue Account stands at 17 crores and 55 lakhs, which is 33 lakhs more than the anticipated expenditure in the current year On the basis of these estimates there will be a deficit on Revenue Account of a crore and fifty-three lakhs. The working of the Capital and Debt Deposit Section of the Budget is expected to result in a surplus of 86 lakhs. The net effect of the deficit on Revenue Account and of the surplus outside it is to reduce the opening balance by 67 lakhs The year is accordingly expected to end with a closing balance of 87 lakhs.

Let me now explain briefly the reasons for the variation between the Revised and the Budget.

The improvement of 34 lakhs under "Revenue Receipts" is, broadly speaking, attributable to an increase of 20 lakhs under "Income Tax" and 14 lakhs under "Other Taxes and Duties". The growth under "Income Tax" has been allowed on the strength of the latest advice received from the Government of India. The increase under "Other Taxes and Duties" is due to the anticipation of larger receipts from the Raw Jute Taxation Act on the assumption that the provision for the exemption of purchases made under contracts entered into prior to 1st January, 1942, has already worked itself out. There are lesser variations under other heads which practically cancel each other. Thus a decrease of about 11 lakhs under Agriculture due mainly to the omission of the special receipts included in the Revised on account of the "Grow More Food" campaign is offset by an almost equivalent increase in Land Revenue receipts, assumed in the expectation that the coming year will be a normal one, free from widespread natural calamities.

As I have already stated, the Budget provides for expenditure on Revenue Account 33 lakhs in excess of the revised estimates for the current year. That figure, however, is not the real measure of the additional provision

included in the estimates for 1943-44. Honourable members will recall that the Revised includes 18 lakhs for the "Grow More Food" campaign. This provision has not been repeated for the coming year. Then again the bulk of the heavy expenditure required in the current year for the relief of distress caused by cyclone and flood has been omitted from the Budget. The reduction on this account is close upon 38 lakhs. It follows, therefore, that the additional provision to be accounted for in the estimates for the coming year is not merely 33 lakhs but this amount plus 56 lakhs or 89 lakhs in all.

A substantial part of this increase, amounting to no less than 35 lakhs, is attributable to the enhanced rates of dearness allowance. It would be unsafe at this stage to assume that the efforts of the Directorate of Civil Supplies will be so successful as to permit any appreciable reduction in the allowances now in force. Our estimates therefore assume that today's rates will be in force for full twelve months in the coming year as against a few months only in the current year. The bulk of the remaining increase is due, similarly, to the requirements throughout the whole of 1943-44, of schemes which have been in force for only a part of the current year. Thus, an extra 17 lakhs is required for the Home Guards Organisation, an extra 3 lakhs for the Directorate of Civil Supplies and an additional sum of 9½ lakhs for the scheme for the control of vagrancy. A further 7 lakhs is required for the repair of Irrigation Embankments damaged by the flood. I do not propose to tax the patience of the House by a detailed enumeration of minor variations as full particulars will be found in the Red Book.

It will be seen therefore that apart from the increased provision on account of dearness allowance, the additional provision included in the Budget is almost exclusively for the continuation of new measures, mainly connected with the war, which have been initiated in the current year. Two items only may be said to fall outside this category. The budget provision for grants to District School Boards is 8 lakhs higher than the revised: but 3 lakhs of this is intended to permit the payment of a dearness allowance to teachers in primary schools. There is also a new provision of about 1 lakh for the improvement of the silk industry—a scheme of special importance at the present time when there is a large demand for high quality silk for parachutes for the Defence services.

The surplus of 86 lakhs in the Debt Deposit Section of the Budget is due principally to the advance of a crore and 6 lakhs from the Centre in respect of the provincial share of the poolable Civil Defence expenditure in the coming year.

This will be offset to some extent by the repayment of 31 lakhs representing a fifth part of the advances received on the same account in 1941-42 and the current year.

As a result of the many and varied extra burdens thrown on the revenues of the Province by the war, our annual expenditure is now some 150 lakhs more than our revenue.

Outside the Revenue Account also there would have been a heavy deficit during the current year, had we not obtained a Ways and Means advance of 2½ crores from the Central Government in addition to the A.R.P. advance of one crore ten lakhs. As I have already informed the House on the 31st March, 1943, we shall be owing India 4 crores. It should therefore occasion no surprise when I tell honourable members that I consider it my duty to ask the House to empower me to raise additional revenue during the coming year.

I have no intention of trying to balance my budget: I do not propose that we should "pay as we go": that would require additional taxation far beyond anything I can contemplate at the present time. The estimated yield of the enhanced taxation I have in mind will be about 33 lakhs. We shall still have to borrow one crore six lakhs to meet our share of the poolable Civil Defence expenditure, and after the repayment of one-fifth of the loans taken on this account in 1941-42 and 1942-43 the net increase in our indebtedness will be 75 lakhs, so that on 31st March, 1944, we shall be owing India 4 crores 75 lakhs.

I appreciate that even with an addition of 33 lakhs our closing balance at 119 lakhs will be quite inadequate for times such as these through which we are now passing, nor have I overlooked the fact that our budget estimates do not include any provision on account of a subvention for the Calcutta Corporation—an inevitable liability: but these are difficult times and while I have no hesitation in asking the House to enhance the rates of the duties in the Bill now in members' hands, I am anxious not to do anything that might entail any material addition to the already phenomenally high cost of living for the poorer classes. And so for the time being I am content to meet a part of our war time expenditure with borrowed money: nor do I consider that this course is unorthodox or unsound in the present emergency: or at least for so long as we are unable to reduce the prices of the necessaries of life from the present high levels.

APPENDIX.

[Figures are in thousands of rupees.]

Receipts.	Actuals, 1941-42.	1942-43. Budget.	1942-43. Revised	Budget, 1943-44.
Opening Balance ..	1,09,51	1,14,73	1,32,40	1,53,76
Revenue Receipts ..	14,94,28	15,69,79	15,67,53	16,01,87
Receipts from Debt Heads ..	25,60,62	18,63,39	28,43,98	26,62,42
Total ..	41,64,41	35,47,91	45,43,91	44,18,05
Expenditure.				
Revenue Expenditure ..	15,50,38	16,75,38	17,21,61	17,54,85
Capital Expenditure ..	—4,63	—2,38	—80	29
Expenditure on Debt Heads ..	24,86,26	17,96,17	26,69,34	25,76,37
Closing Balance ..	1,32,40	78,74	1,53,76	86,54
**Total .. **	**41,64,41**	**35,47,91**	**45,43,91**	**44,18,05**

[Figures are in thousands of rupees.]

Net Result.	Actuals. 1941-42.	1942-49. Budget.	1942-49. Revised.	Budget. 1943-44.
Surplus + / Deficit −				
On Revenue Account ..	−56,10	−1,05,59	−1,54,08	−1,52,98
Surplus + / Deficit −				
Outside Revenue Account ..	+78,99	+69,60	+1,75,44	+85,76
Total. Surplus + / Deficit −				
Excluding Opening Balance ..	+22,89	−35,99	+21,36	−67,22

GOVERNMENT BILL.

The Bengal Finance Bill, 1943.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, I beg to introduce the Bengal Finance Bill, 1943.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: On a point of order, Sir. We are not quite sure if it is in order to introduce a Bill which has not been made available to the members before and which has been placed on the table only today.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Bill has been published in the *Calcutta Gazette* today.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: We do not know anything of it. If the Bill had been circulated previously, if it had been sent to us at least 7 days before, then it could have been introduced. If it was published in the *Calcutta Gazette*, no introduction was necessary. In the case of Government Bills if a Bill was previously published in the *Calcutta Gazette*, formal introduction would not be necessary. But now the position is that this Bill has neither been gazetted nor has it been made available to the members earlier. It has been circulated to the members today only.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Dr. Sanyal, in this case I have already waived the rule.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With due deference to you, Sir, I submit that in the case of an important measure like the Finance Bill involving taxation which affects hundreds and thousands and lakhs of people you should not hurry the measure up and hustle the House.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Dr. Sanyal, you will get lots of opportunities to speak on this Bill. This is merely a formal introduction. You cannot raise any objection at this stage. You will have your chance when the Bill will be discussed. I hope you will not oppose at this stage. As I have said, this is mere introduction.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: All right.

(The Secretary then read the short title of the Bill.)

Adjournment.

The House was then adjourned at 4-45 p.m. till 4 p.m. on Wednesday, the 17th February, 1943, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the Provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Wednesday, the 17th February, 1943, at 4 p.m.

Present:

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. SYED JALALUDDIN HASHEMY) in the Chair, 7 Hon'ble Ministers and 194 members.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Stock of quinine with Government.

***32. Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Forest and Excise Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the amount of stock of quinine up to March, 1942; and

(*ii*) the amount of quinine that was consumed in Bengal for the years 1935-36 and 1941-42, respectively?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the Government has reserved a considerable quantity of quinine for military purposes?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the average pre-war rate of quinine and the present rate of quinine per pound?

MINISTER in charge of the FOREST and EXCISE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Upendra Nath Barman): (*a*)(*i*) The stock held by the Provincial Cinchona Department on the 31st March, 1942, was 32,904 lbs.

(*ii*) The amounts of Bengal Government quinine consumed in Bengal were as follows:—

	lbs.
1935-36	.. 23,354
1941-42	... 50,666

Accurate figures about the consumption of quinine imported into Bengal by private agencies from outside during these years are not available. But it is estimated that on average 90,000 lbs. of quinine were consumed in Bengal annually during the last few years.

(*b*) Quinine is controlled by the Central Government. I have no information on the point, but no Bengal quinine has been so reserved.

(*c*) The pre-war price was Rs.18 per lb.

The present price is Rs.25-8 per lb.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state, with reference to answer (*c*), whether he is aware of the fact that the present price of quinine in the mufassal is more than Rs. 250 per pound?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: That is not Government quinine. That much I can say.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answer (*b*), where it is stated that quinine is controlled by the Central Government, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the understanding between the Central Government and the Provincial Government by which the Provincial Government permitted the Central Government to control the production in this province?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: It was not a question of permission by the province to the Centre. The arrangement that was made at the Delhi Conference was that the two producing provinces, viz., Bengal and Madras, would throw in their production along with the reserve held at the Centre. The Centre had made some purchases from Java either before the war started or Java fell. Now that stock along with the annual production of the two provinces will be pooled together and distributed throughout the whole of India on a certain basis.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: What was the basis on which distribution was made?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: The basis is malaria index. At present 75 per cent of the normal consumption is taken as the basis.

Mr. M. A. H. ISPAHANI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether quinine is actually available at Rs. 25-8 per lb. and, if so, where?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Certainly Government quinine is available at Rs. 25-8 per pound. The system at present is that the Quinine Sale Depôt which is now owned by Government itself will distribute according as the allocation is made by the Public Health Department. It will go to the district authorities and the district authorities will select certain retail dealers in the mufassal, and also in the towns.

Mr. M. A. H. ISPAHANI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is aware of the fact that there are many dispensaries and doctors in this province who are clamouring for quinine not at Rs. 25-8 but are even prepared to pay Rs. 250 a lb., and they are unable to secure it? What is the use of giving a reply like this on the floor of the House?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You don't want an answer to your question.

Mr. M. A. H. ISPAHANI: I want an answer to the question whether he is aware of the fact that doctors and dispensaries are anxious to purchase quinine at Rs. 200 per lb. but are not getting it?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: They may buy quinine at that rate from outside agencies and not from the Government Sale Depôt.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the rationing authority of the district gives permission to purchase quinine only from Messrs. Shaw, Wallace and Co. and at a very high rate?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: The contract with Messrs. Shaw, Wallace and Co. has been terminated.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the annual production of quinine in Bengal?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: 50,000 lbs. on an average.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is only the supporters of Government and doctors who are related to Government supporters who are entitled to get quinine from the Quinine Sale Depôt?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Sale is not being done by any outsider but by the permanent officials.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to tell the House how much quinine has been allocated to Bengal as a result of the Delhi Conference?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: He has already stated that it is approximately 75 per cent. of the normal consumption.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: I want the actual quantity.

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN:

Quinine Salts—28,951 lbs. for the whole year 1942-43.
Cinchona Febrifuge—17,283 lbs.
Unreserved Field—22,000 lbs. for 7 months from 1st September, 1942 to 31st March, 1943.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state in view of the meagre supply provided what steps have been taken by Government or whether Government is considering the desirability of taking any steps to supplement the allocation to this province or whether Government has any scheme for manufacturing or producing more quinine within a very short period of three years or so?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Which question am I to answer?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased state whether Government have taken any steps or are considering the sirability of taking any steps to improve the supply of quinine in this ovince in view of the meagre allocation provided out of the Central ocks?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I have already swered that quinine is controlled by the Central Government. So, the estion does not arise as to what the province has done to supply the ovince itself. Of course, attempts are being made and new plantations ve already been started to increase the supply of quinine from Bengal.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased state whether the dispensaries of local bodies—union board dispensaries d district board dispensaries—are getting their regular quota of quinine ich they had been getting in former years?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I am sorry to tell you, , that my department is now concerned with the production side of inine or cinchona and the allocation side has been transferred to the blic Health Department.

Scarcity of quinine.

***33. Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH SEN:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in arge of the Forest and Excise Department be pleased to state whether is a fact that there has been a scarcity in the supply of quinine in this ovince for the last one year?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be ased to state whether any steps have been taken to induce the Central overnment to release a larger quota of quinine for this Province?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any steps have en taken to extend the cultivation of cinchona in the Province?

(*d*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any application s been received from any private party for taking lease of suitable Govern- nt land for the cultivation of cinchona plant?

(*e*) If the answer to (*d*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister pleased to state whether Government propose to take any action in the atter?

(*f*) If the answer to (*e*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be ased to state the reason thereof?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: (*a*) to (*d*) Yes.

(*e*) and (*f*) Government are unable to spare any of the lands at present own to be fit for cinchona cultivation, all such available land being required connection with their own schemes for extension of cinchona cultivation.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased state if in case any person discovers any land suitable for the cultivation cinchona, Government will render him the necessary help?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Government will consider that point most sympathetically.

SPECIAL MOTION.

Supply and Distribution of Foodstuffs, Coal, Kerosene Oil and Cloth.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: We decided yesterday, in consultation with the Chief Whip of the Progressive Coalition Party and the Chief Whips of the Opposition Parties, that after disposing of one or two questions today I would take up the special motion on food-supply if the House so desired. I hope you have already got the special motion and the amendments tabled by the Muslim League Party and the Congress Party.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Only amendments have been circulated, Sir, but the main resolution has not been circulated.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Assembly office has circulated both the main motion and the amendments by post, and I think the members have got them

Mr. P. BANERJI: No, Sir, we have not got the special motion. Up to 3 o'clock nothing has been received

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The special motion is so simple that if you will kindly listen to me, you will understand its full implications and be able to start discussion on it immediately. I am seeing to it that the motion and the amendments are supplied to you as soon as possible.

Mr. A. F. STARK: We have not got the amendments also.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am reading out the special motion which is as follows:—

"This Assembly do take into consideration the situation in the province relating to the supply and distribution of foodstuffs, coal, kerosene oil and cloth."

To this special motion I have received two amendments, one from the Congress Party and the other from the Muslim League Party.

Mr. YOUSUF MIRZA: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now take into consideration the situation in the province relating to the supply and distribution of foodstuffs, coal, kerosene oil and cloth.

The supply of food, fuel, cloth and oil is of such vast importance to the province that the Government has decided to allot two days in the Budget Session for the purpose of discussion. The Hon'ble Minister will place before the House what has been done in the past by Government in regard to the solution of this very difficult, complex and gigantic problem. He will take the House into confidence about the policy behind the various measures and steps taken by Government for solving this problem. It is my earnest desire and it is the desire of the party to which I have the

honour to belong that the viewpoint of all sections of the House in a matter of this importance should be ascertained. I am sure the combined wisdom of the House will enable Government to receive from it constructive suggestions. The House will have patience with me if I state that the problem is not merely a provincial problem, but it is complicated with the total situation throughout India. The province is no doubt bound to solve its problems as far as possible in the present circumstances to the satisfaction of the people.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: If the House so desires, members will start the discussion now on the main special motion, and if it is the intention of the House, I will take up the amendments which I have received from the Congress and the Muslim League Parties tomorrow and also any other amendment from the Government side if it comes up. If the House agrees to that course, I will confine the speech of every member to ten minutes, but when the movers and leaders of parties will speak I will certainly give them more than ten minutes. I hope honourable members will co-operate with me in conducting the debate in the way I have just mentioned.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Sir, we were given to understand that the special motion will exclusively deal with foodstuffs only, but now we find that other necessities of life, namely, fuel, cloth and kerosene, have been included. I would ask you, Sir, to take up the question of foodstuffs first, and others may be dealt with separately.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think these are all allied matters which should all be taken up together.

Maluvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Then, Sir, everything will be soiled by kerosene!

Mr. K. SHAHABUDDIN: So far as the amendments are concerned, Sir, I suggest that both the amendments may be moved now when the main motion is now before us and there should be one discussion on the special motion as well as the amendments. We have got only two days to discuss this all-important problem, but if we at once carry on discussion on the main resolution and then the amendments are taken up tomorrow we should be given more time. My suggestion therefore is that the amendments may be moved now and there may be one discussion on all of them. My second suggestion is that ten minutes is too short a time for one speaker. I know we have got only two days and most of us want to speak. Therefore, either we should agree to sit longer and give adequate opportunities to the speakers to speak or another day should be given for this debate.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, if I am called upon to take the first opportunity to place before the House the considered views of the party that I have the honour to represent, I will have no other alternative than to move the amendment given notice of, viz., that after the motion moved by my esteemed friend, the Chief Whip of the Government, to add the following:—

"And declares its considered opinion that the Government of Bengal should take immediate steps along lines indicated hereunder with a view to

mobilise the best talents and resources of the province irrespective of party considerations for the purpose of effectively dealing with the situation—

(1) A separate Department of Food and Essential Supplies should be set up and placed under the charge of a Minister having no other major portfolio under his care.

(2) The Minister in charge should be actively assisted in his duties by a Central Food and Supplies Committee composed as follows:—

(*a*) eight members of the Bengal Legislative Assembly, one each representing the major parties and groups in the Assembly;
(*b*) three members of the Bengal Legislative Council representing different parties;
(*c*) one member representing the Bengal Chamber of Commerce;
(*d*) two members representing Indian commercial bodies, for example, the Bengal National, Indian, Muslim and Marwari Chambers of Commerce;
(*e*) two experts of whom one must be an Indian; and
(*f*) the Hon'ble Minister in charge, who may be the Chairman.

(3) The principal officers entrusted with the carrying out of the policy determined by the Minister in charge in consultation with the Central Food and Supplies Committee should be Indians having intimate knowledge of the economic conditions and needs of the people of this province.

(4) People's Food Committees should be constituted in every district and in every ward of the city of Calcutta and the suburban municipalities with a view to mobilise public co-operation and support for measures to maintain and distribute supplies properly.

(5) Vigorous steps should be taken to encourage the production of mor food in the province and to procure imports from outside.

(6) Exports out of the province should be totally stopped for the present until surplus production is actually attained."

Sir, I would beg your indulgence and the indulgence of the House to speak somewhat in detail with a view to acquaint honourable members assembled here with the state of affairs that is now prevailing and the short history leading thereto.

Sir, I would expect, if I can give satisfactory account of the time taken by myself, that you will be pleased to extend the time allotted to at least half an hour.

Sir, I, and on this side of the House most of us, expected that today when the Government wanted the privilege of initiating the debate, Government would come forward with their considered views on the situation and would give a detailed account of what Government had attempted so far to do to meet the situation. We are, however, disappointed in this respect. We are, Sir, groping in the dark today and members assembled here do not know the mind of Government and, I presume, so far as the Ministry is concerned, they have no policy or programme on this vital question.

Sir, so far as this House is aware, the first trouble started when we were acquainted with a certain policy of removal of rice and paddy from the denial areas early in April, 1942. That started the difficulties to which the province has been thrown later on in greater and greater degree. Some of us who were at that moment summoned to meet the highest executive of the Government did express in no equivocal terms that this denial policy leading to removal of the so-called surplus rice and paddy from certain areas might involve Government into trouble, but that advice was not heeded. The denial policy had to be pursued for reasons of military necessity and that was a panicky measure with all the evils thereof. We had certain agents appointed in a hurry and those agents that were appointed were not all with the approval of the Hon'ble Minister in charge, far less of the Cabinet as a whole. Thereafter, Sir, assurances were given that so far as this rice was concerned, it would be made available to meet deficits in deficit districts when the need would be acute. We do not know how far these assurances have been acted up to, but this much we have heard and we have reasons to believe that the report is correct that a substantial portion of that rice had been exported out of the province and to that extent at least we could not avail of the amount collected in the hands of the Government agents to relieve distress in the province which developed at a later stage.

The second mistaken policy adopted by Government was late in June or early in July, 1942, when towards the latter part of June it was announced that from the 1st of July certain ceiling prices would be fixed and given effect to. At that time, considering the then existing state of affairs and the condition of the market, the prices fixed were rather low and representations were made to Government that if Government really meant to strictly adhere to such prices, as they then declared, the stocks in Calcutta would go down and trade would be scared away. After these representations within a short period of three weeks, those ceiling prices were raised by about 8 annas and for the time being the difficulty was averted. But, Sir, what then appeared to us and to the commercial community in general was that the Government of Bengal failed then, as they are doing now, to have any comprehensive policy—a policy that would be required to meet the requirements not only of the city of Calcutta as a whole, not only of the districts in which industrial labour abounds, but also of the province as a whole. The fixation of a controlled price without proper regard to the question of procuring supplies and maintenance of such supplies was bound to fail and it did fail in no time. Within a few months it was discovered that the policy then pursued by Government led to the creation of black markets, because there was no alternative for trade and for the civil population in general to obtain supplies except through the black market where stocks vanished in spite of the Government. Sir, curiously enough as a result of the absence of a comprehensive policy, Government did not or could not stop black-marketing and speculative dealings of hoarders and profiteers went on unchecked for a time.

Thereafter, Sir, there was a long talk of large supplies being required by Ceylon and other parts of India. A Minister of the Ceylon Government came to Bengal demanding rice and paddy supply for Ceylon. He was

given tall promises. Thereafter, Sir, a representative of the Government of India, Mr. Holdsworth, came down and he also was given promises of certain supplies from this province because at that moment Government advisers thought that there was a huge surplus that the province could spare. These assurances naturally created a bullish effect on the market and the psychological effect continued and pressed prices upwards. At that time, it was found by the Government that the Department of Commerce with a few officers attached thereto could not cope with the problem adequately and the Directorate of Civil Supplies was created, but in creating that Directorate the choice was made of one European officer who had never dealt with the business community nor had any experience in similar matters. The result was what we all apprehended. Although that officer, Sir, had been one of the most hardworking and conscientous workers, he failed mainly because he had little regard for the elementary principles of economics. He had forgotten all his economics during the long career of public service in this country. This officer, Mr. Pinnell, admitted his failure after a few months and, Sir, thereafter he came forward with a proposal that another expert officer was required by him in order that he might know trade conditions more intimately and have a commercial man associated with him in his work. In making the appointment of a commercial man thereafter, inevitably again the choice fell upon a British non-official in this country. Sir, I have no grievance against the person as such. He may or may not be a very efficient person and an expert person for the kind of work required, but, Sir, it was curious that Government could not make a choice from one who was of the soil and knew the men of the soil intimately and their economic conditions. And what was the qualification for which he was appointed? He was not, so far as we are aware, associated with the rice trade as such, but it was reported that he knew something about it because he was connected with a bank which advanced money to traders in rice and that bank was also not functioning in and around Calcutta which was one of the main distributing centres for rice and paddy in this side, but the branch with which he was connected was functioning in Chittagong and was dealing in Burma rice. I do not want to enter into that aspect of the question today for I do believe another occasion may come when the merits and demerits of the choice will be more fully discussed. However, Sir, even after that appointment in recent weeks we find no improvement made in the situation and why is it so? That is because even now the Government of Bengal have failed to formulate any comprehensive policy. Soon after the appointment of Mr. Pinnell as Director of Civil Supplies, he felt the difficulty of maintaining supplies unless trade was allowed to move in its normal course and in a way he connived at de-controlling and control over prices was for the time being relaxed. Immediately thereafter large supplies began to flow and price in Calcutta came down substantially, although it was stabilised at a fairly high level compared to previous years. Thus, Sir, trade for the time being began to move and supplies did come, but suddenly there was another stage which intervened. Some Hon'ble Ministers of this Government went to Delhi and there they had a conference with the representatives of the Government of India and rumours came afloat

that they agreed or at least they committed themselves to the export of large quantities of rice and paddy from this province to places on the west coast and to Ceylon and even to places outside the borders of India. This immediately had its psychological effect and prices began to soar and, Sir, then it was discovered that simultaneously with this situation large purchases were indulged in by commercial houses with industrial labour to keep satisfied and also by the Government of India directly through the Supply Department for purposes of the military and other more urgent and essential services. The combined effect of all this was again a bullish tendency leading to a continued rise in prices. Then Sir, on the top of all this came the cyclone, the devastating cyclone which swept away a large part of Southern Bengal and destroyed crop of a very large area. Soon after that we had the first forecast published which showed that Bengal this year was faced with serious shortage in the total crop. The shortage was estimated by Government at near about 35 to 40 per cent., while the trade placed it at 50 per cent. of our normal requirement. The effect naturally was disastrous and from the middle of November prices began to go up again until they reached the worst level about the middle of December when the price went up for the medium rice to as high as Rs. 14 in the Calcutta market. Sir, Government action at this stage was again partial and faulty. Government placed an embargo on movement of rice from the Rajshahi Division, but they did not place a similar embargo on the whole of the province and they did not also have a comprehensive scheme so as to control the whole stock available and to move rice from such places where rice could be had to devastated and deficit areas. The result was that while the price in the Rajshahi Division went down by about two rupees, prices in other places went up correspondingly. It was then urged on the then Director of Civil Supplies that this partial control was bound to lead to greater complications and create further black markets. He, however, realised this very late, and it is only today I find that the restrictions on movements outside Rajshahi under the old order have been withdrawn.

Sir, in the next stage, Government issued a sort of a warning, that was a mild threat though, to speculators, who were asked not to buy large quantities lest their stocks might, if they were found to be profiteering and hoarding for profit, be taken over by Government and they might be faced with losses.

After this, Sir, the air raid on Calcutta came and threw the whole of this part of the province temporarily into a chaos. Prices suddenly soared and went up to as much as Rs. 16 for medium rice at that stage and Government felt it necessary to seize some stocks in and around Calcutta. This was done, however, with a view not so much to help the civil population in general but to maintain the morale of labour by supplying some food to those who were connected with industries and particularly associated with war work. Trade naturally became nervous and shy and thereafter Government was compelled to adopt a direct purchase policy and had to devise a system of purchases through Government agency for different parts of the province, particularly for the buying districts.

Sir, throughout the period we find a total absence of any consolidated plan or policy under which the whole of the province was to be thought of. The failure of Government in this respect has been all along colossal in that Government or the gentlemen responsible for Government policy were only looking at it from the narrow point of view of maintaining supplies only for a small section of the people, namely, industrial labour and those associated with the war work. Neither were those gentlemen prepared to take the responsibility of feeding the entire population of Calcutta and the suburbs, nor were they prepared to take the responsibility for providing food for the whole of the province. Sir, in pursuance of the views held by the advisers of Government, a system of selective distribution was then adopted, a scheme the pernicious effect of which is already being noticed, and I am afraid will be patent more and more in a short time. The system of selective distribution means that Government is maintaining a priority list of persons and firms and organisations to which Government give their seized or acquired supply of rice first and simultaneously with this Government have imposed rigid control on movements to and from Calcutta and to and from other districts in the province. The result has been that so far as the civil population other than industrial labour is concerned prices have gone up and are bound to go up tremendously. There is an economic falacy involved in this selective distribution. If Government or the agency entrusted by Government to do this work think that mere partial maintenance of supply for a small section is their responsibility and seeks to maintain that supply at a low price, naturally there will be a corresponding rise in the prices for general supply, the supply that is left uncontrolled. That has been the position in the case of cloth which is very interesting to study. You may be aware, Sir, that so far as cloth-supply is concerned 60 per cent. and more of the loomage of most of the mills in India, and sometimes in some places even more, has been commandeered for maintaining supplies for the army requirements, and the price fixed for such supplies is so low that the mills have to make up their high cost by increasing the price for the remaining quantity sold to the public. The price to the public has thus gone up tremendously.

The scheme propounded thereafter for the distribution and purchase of rice is, I believe, known to many members. A number of Government agents had been appointed and they were asked to buy rice and paddy from "Buying Districts" as they are called—not surplus districts—at certain stated prices. There is a feeling in some quarters that the districts of Burdwan, Bankura, Midnapore and the like are allotted to agents for purchase mainly because they are supposed to be surplus districts. But Government claim that, that is not the position. In their terminology these are not to be known as "surplus districts" but really "Buying Districts" where ordinarily in normal years considerable purchase and trade movements take place.

In the "Buying Districts" Government have fixed certain prices, but it is reported that the agents appointed have not been able to purchase the

rice and paddy within the limitations imposed on them. Under the circumstances we are led to feel that when the agents have failed there should be some machinery set up for acquiring paddy and rice in the mufassal and bringing them down to Calcutta.

Sir, I understand that in view of this situation only this morning the department concerned has been advised to suspend the operation of Government agents as a whole, and Government are trying now to have direct purchase through the new Food Grains Purchasing Officer whose appointment I have referred to a few minutes ago.

There were of course certain essential difficulties as well as drawbacks in the Government's agency scheme. But the scheme that is now being proposed is fraught with still greater drawbacks and is likely to lead to greater difficulties. It has one essential bedrock on which Mr. McInnes wants to build. He wants to revert to de-control of prices and he quotes the example of wheat purchases in the Punjab to justify the cause. Sir, as an humble student of Economics who has also had some training in these very important realities of life in the commercial field, I want to record a warning. I hope Mr. McInnes has also learnt by this time what we learnt readily in the Universities and realise that where there is a surplus you can leave it to internal local competition to maintain prices, but where there is a deficit if you allow competition prices are bound to go up and not come down. Mr. McInnes, I understand, recommends that there should be no control of price in Bengal at least for the time being. And God help Bengalis if this recommendation is accepted; because you do not know to what limit prices may go up. If the new proposals of Mr. McInnes are adopted, there will still have to be agents who will probably be masquerading in a different name instead of being Government agents as Mr. Pinnell called them. They will be Mr McInnes' nominees who will also have to be given permits for movement of rice and paddy from one district to another and in practice if these men have to give a guarantee of supplies, as Mr. McInnes conceives, then naturally he or such trader will have to cover the uncertain bearing of the market and their price will be generally on the high side and will not be lower than the present scales. Again, those merchants will have internal competition in the districts for purchase, as a result of which prices in the purchasing centres will go up and the whole scheme will fail and the main object of the Government will be frustrated. However, Sir, I have got an open mind on this issue, and I do feel that there may yet be room for adjusting the Government agency system of purchase with some form of limited free trade.

The contemplated distribution of supplies by Government is another aspect which will have to be dealt with, and I am afraid it will take a much longer time than at my disposal to deal with the entire problem of distribution. The absence of provision for meeting the requirements of deficit districts is one serious drawback to which I want at the outset to invite the Government's attention. Districts like Dacca, Mymensingh and Faridpur are now crying hoarse for some food-supply. The Government agency as at present conceived cannot give any relief and does not give any

relief. Sir, frantic telegrams from the Faridpur District Magistrate have all gone unheeded. If District Officers are going to be treated in this way, persons who have got to maintain peace and tranquillity and morale of the people in their respective areas, then how could you expect people in general to have any faith in the administration? Sir, it is surprising, and I have got it from a respectable member, a person from Faridpur, that the Foodgrains Purchasing Officer has directly addressed letters to the Faridpur District Magistrate. He has in such letters, however, not confined himself to the question as to whether he can supply or cannot supply the rice, but he has been trying to give a homily to the District Magistrate—"You ought to be able to manage with so much supply as sufficient rice is grown in the district. You have so many lakhs of maunds of rice and you ought to be able to manage with that" and so on. The local officers living there who are the local agents of Government to enquire do not, as if, know the condition, and it is the Calcutta office of the Foodgrains Purchasing Officer that knows more about it.

Sir, this leads to the question of what is the relation between the Civil Supply Directorate and the Foodgrains Purchasing Officer and the Foodgrains Purchasing Officer and the other administrative departments of Goverment. I should think that the purchasing officer is specially deputed to effect purchases in the proper way; it is not his business to look to distribution which must be the responsibility of the Civil Supply Directorate as such functioning under the Ministry who have responsibility for the people of Bengal as a whole.

Sir, the purchase scheme and the controlled movement are naturally linked up with rationing and rationing is an important subject that is now engaging our attention. I would invite your attention in this connection to the recent diversion of Mr. Pinnell to the post of Special Officer for devising rationing for the Calcutta area. Mr. Pinnell has recently addressed a certain questionnaire to the trade through certain persons who met him in a conference a few days ago. The trend of those questions show that even now unfortunately for the province Mr. Pinnell is looking forward to provide partial relief only. He seems to be primarily concerned with the maintenance of supplies to a selective group or groups. (Mr. ABDUL WAHAB KHAN: In the urban area only?) Not even the entire population of the urban area, but to a small section of the people of the urban area only. There I join issue with Mr. Pinnell. He might work hard and he may be a sincere and honest officer, but all his attempts have so far ended in failure and will bear no fruit unless he changes his outlook. Mr. Pinnell wants expert assistance and I have my sympathy with him when he says that he requires an expert. But Sir, there is a snag in it. As soon as an expert will be talked of, as the esteemed member of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce present in the conference suggested, demand from some quarters will be made that the expert must be brought from Britain, as if it is only the British people who have a monopoly of expert knowledge, and although they may know nothing about India they are the people capable of handling the food problem of India properly. Sir, what is well

known is that these self-appointed experts often bungle things and act in a manner that is not only prejudicial to the people of the province but is extremely dangerous to the morale of the masses at a time like this when we are passing through critical times. Sir, I am referring—pardon me for a little digression in this connection—to the expert that was imported by Mr. Suhrawardy some months ago, in the person of Professor Todd who was imported for enquiring into the *fatka* market. This gentleman was supposed to know something about the futures market in cotton in Liverpool and suddenly he has now become an expert in jute. Thus a new expert has been forced upon the Government and on the advice of this expert Government have recently had to swallow the bitter pill which that expert had given them, namely, that in the next year there should be eight annas of jute crop instead of five annas or one-third of the area of 1940 which was almost unanimously demanded by every section of this House. Sir, such are the types of experts that we have been experiencing all these years and what we have seen in this case has been the experience in many other departments also. So far as the Department of Civil Supplies is concerned, if I have occasion to go into details, I will go into them later on. Generally, it has been our experience that some of these highly placed gentlemen, these Britishers—when they deal between Indians and Britishers—forget all canons of fairness and justice, although I am prepared to admit that between Indians and Indians they—at least some of them—try to deal justice fairly. Even a Justice of the High Court forgets his judicial responsibilities when he takes over the charge of the Civil Supply Directorate

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: He is not functioning as a Judge of the High Court now; he is now the Director of Civil Supplies.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: But he has not shed his Judgeship yet, and I must say that this civil supply has been a matter ill-fitted to his sphere of duties. What I was pointing out, even a High Court Judge sometimes forgets himself when he has got to deal justice between Indians and Europeans. For only last week a foreign British ship has got certain supplies of rice given to them from Calcutta supplied through the good offices of the Director of Civil Supplies. This supply was supposed to be for the crew of the ship. No one can imagine that this supply the shipping authorities were unable to secure in Calcutta without the help of the Civil Supply Department. And yet this was arranged by the Director of Civil Supplies under the presidency of a High Court Judge, simply because it was a British firm, namely, James Finlay and Co., which was concerned. Similarly, when some weeks ago, we got 1,000 tons of wheat, specially released for the province from out of the supplies obtained with great difficulty through imports from Australia, what did we find? The distribution list shows that without any regard for the capacity of the mills and the production figures of previous years, three firms were given equal shares out of that supply, of which two were European and the third a European-patronised Marwari firm. That is ordinarily the position and of that we have to be particularly careful.

I have also heard recently that there is an idea of attaching a police officer to the Civil Supply Directorate to help the Civil Supply Director with information regarding "black marketing," hoarding and things like that. I do feel that there must be an agency for getting correct information along these lines, but on a question of principle I do protest against the police being partially allocated to a particular department of Government. The police in the country must be for all and must be also available for the particular kind of work for which they may be required. There should not be or need not be a particular police officer or set of officers earmarked for a department. ——(At this stage the red light was lit.)

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Dr. Sanyal, you have reached the maximum time given to you.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I would request you to give me one minute more.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: All right, you can speak for another half a minute.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I have proposed my amendment with the greatest humility and consideration. I have not tried to criticise Government in the way that we ordinarily do because I fully realise the difficulties and know that probably the Hon'ble Minister in charge will plead helpless in this matter. I realise that the problem is immense, and it requires joint effort of every section of the House if we really want its solution. I am, therefore, prepared to place my and our party's co-operation at the disposal of Government for any measure that Government may think necessary to provide adequate food, adequate clothing, proper fuel, kerosene and other necessities of life for the suffering people of this province. Let us, Sir, treat this as an all-party question. Sir, if Government are so prepared let them come forward with a frank and open admission of their failure and let us put the best men possible to tackle the problems. And I hope my friend the Hon'ble Minister in charge will realise his own limitations also and he himself will admit that he does not really understand the problems and guide the function of the department and, therefore, in all fairness he should also make room for somebody more capable.

(At this stage the House was adjourned for ten minutes.)

(After adjournment.)

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move as an amendment that this House is of opinion that Government have failed to tackle satisfactorily the problems of supply and distribution of foodstuffs, kerosene oil and other necessities of life and is further of opinion that—

(*a*) Government should take measures to secure adequate supply and equitable distribution of foodstuffs and other necessary commodities at reasonable prices;

(*b*) Government should take adequate measures to suppress the black market, hoarding, profiteering and other anti-social activities;

(*c*) Government should take necessary measures to supplement the resources of the province by importing wheat, rice, cloth and other necessities of life;

(*d*) Government should adopt vigorous measures to grow more food within the province and encourage and grant facilities in all possible manner to the agriculturists for this purpose; and

(*e*) Government should co-operate with the principal political parties within the province in the above matters.

Sir, no one can deny that this is one of the most serious matters that we are considering on the floor of the House today. I think a situation like this has never arisen in Bengal, or for the matter of that in India, during the 150 years of British rule in this country, but I do not know whether the present Government of Bengal, I mean the Ministry, have realised the seriousness of the situation. It seems to me that they are taking it as child's play. A similar resolution was tabled and discussed in the Central Legislative Assembly. You must have noticed, Sir, that there the Hon'ble Mr. Sarker, the Food Member of the Government of India, himself initiated the debate; and not only did he initiate the debate, but he gave that House facts and figures on which the members of that House could apply their minds to the problem before them. But here a formal resolution has been moved and that also not by the Minister in charge but the Chief Whip of the party. He has given us nothing to ponder upon, nothing to discuss upon, nothing indicating what are the things that the Government have hitherto done, what are the lines on which the Government officials are taking action, nothing of the sort. We are asked to discuss this serious problem as if in vacuum. Fortunately, Sir, we know what the condition of the country is; probably the Government do not know. Had the Government known, then they would not have played with this important matter in this way. We do not know what things are coming to. The harvesting season for paddy, the principal food crop of Bengal, is hardly over and yet, Sir, what do we find? We find that rice sells in the mufassal at Rs. 13, Rs. 14, Rs. 15 per maund and in Calcutta at prices much higher than that. What things are coming to—everybody realises except this Government. Do they want a rebellion? If they want, they will have it. And when there will be more of *hát* looting, more of civil disturbance in the province, the only thing that they will do is that they will apply the provisions of some ordinance and haul up starving people before courts and lodge them in jail, but in a situation like that it is the culprits at the top who should be put under trial, who should be pilloried, who should be shot at, if that could be possible.

Sir, I was going to say that Mr. Sarker himself initiated the debate in the Central Assembly. What did he say? I shall quote the initial words with which he initiated the debate. He said:—

"The net gap in our total supply of food-grains during 1943, after taking into account the increase in our requirement, would not exceed two

million tons, representing a deficit of no more than 4 per cent. in our total annual production of principal food-grains. In some of the years immediately preceding the war we pulled through equal or bigger shortages without feeling much strain. The carry-over from previous years might no doubt have stood us in good stead, but even after allowing for this the House would agree that the estimated deficit as such was certainly not of an order that would warrant any alarm." That is what he said. Now what is the position in Bengal we have not been told. The position of the whole of India was given by Mr. Sarker. Here I think Government ought to have given us what the present position in Bengal is. But from previous reports and previous utterances of our Ministers and other Government officials I gather that there is hardly any deficit in Bengal Sir, if there was no deficit, may I know why this increase of price? We should know where we stand. If there is no deficit, there should not be any abnormal increase in price as it obtains today On the other hand, if there is a serious deficit, then we should adopt appropriate measures, so that the deficit may be compensated, but we do not know where we stand I do not know whether Government themselves know where they stand.

Now, Sir, being in this unfortunate position, let us assume that there is not much deficit. If there is not much deficit, then arises an important question which was raised by Dr Sanyal as to whether there should be any control or not. I do not agree to the view that there should be no control. Public opinion of course in Bengal now has veered round to the view that there should be no control, because they have seen the evil effects of the present tinkering control instituted by the Government of Bengal. As a reaction to that, people now think that probably no control is better than this, and I would readily admit, Sir, that if the control is not efficient, if it is unplanned, ill-conceived and inefficient then it is worse than no control. There is no gainsaying that fact, and as the present control is absolutely unplanned, un-co-ordinated, ill-conceived and inefficient, people now think that probably no control is better, but I do not agree with them. The circumstances are abnormal. Profiteers and mischief-makers are out in the open. They will take unfair and dishonest advantage of the situation and with the apathy of Government, as it stands, they will hoard and bring about a far more serious situation if there is no control. I think that there should be control, but not control of the type that the Government of Bengal is now showing in this unfortunate province.

Now, Sir, as regards the happenings in the mufassal regarding the so-called controlled shops and controlled markets, the less said the better. Every member knows what is taking place in these so-called controlled shops. A particular price is fixed for, say, sugar or some other commodity. You go to the controlled shop, but you do not get the thing at all, not that there is no supply. Sometimes there is a supply. The dishonest shop-keeper, whose doings are connived at by Government, sells out small portions of his stock to the public and transmits the rest to the black market and makes enormous profits. That is how things are going on, and it is a matter of ignominy and shame that this Government is not taking stringent and

adequate action to deal with the black market and the mischief-makers. I must admit, Sir, that there are a few District Officers and other officers who are doing their duty by the people of Bengal. They are taking drastic action and in those places conditions are far better than what obtain in other places. If all the officers of Government had been of the same mind and had been similarly active and stringent in their dealings with profiteers and persons operating in the black market, then I think the condition of the country would have been far better than what it is today. I do not know why this Government connives at corruption. The reason why they do so must be well known to Government. Government could easily bring round the situation under control if they actually desired, but it is a pity that they have done practically nothing.

Sir, at present the Government is making heavy purchases in some surplus districts. On what basis they have classified the districts is known to them far better than to anybody else. However, taking their classification to be correct, it is a pity that they do not realise the condition prevailing in some of the deficit districts. I can speak about some deficit districts. I can cite the instance of two of the subdivisions of the Faridpur district. In the Sadar and Goalundo subdivisions in the district of Faridpur, there was almost an absolute failure of paddy in the last season. The result is that no paddy is to be had there. Merchants and licence-holders there are out to purchase paddy for selling it to the people at any price, but they do not get paddy. Some of them went so far as to the district of Barisal, but they were refused purchase of any rice from there, because all rice there is being purchased by Government agents. They could not get rice from Khulna or Dinajpur or anywhere else. How could the people of the Goalundo and Sadar subdivisions survive? These are not the only places. There are similar other places in Bengal, and Government has not taken into account the plight of these people. I can assure you, Sir, that if rice sells in this harvesting season at Rs. 14 or Rs. 15 per maund, the price will rise up to Rs. 30 or Rs. 35 or some such sum within a short time, and people will die in hundreds. Then Government will realise what it is to tinker with a problem like this. But what do they care for?

Now, Sir, that the problem is difficult no one will deny, but that much can be done by Government cannot also be denied. Look at the neighbouring province of Assam. Things are being managed far better there. Rice is not being sold at Rs. 15 per maund there. The price of rice there is, I think, not more than Rs. 7 to Rs. 9, but in the nighbouring province of Bengal rice is not available and the price is Rs. 14 or Rs. 15 per maund in the mufassal. If things can be managed in the province of Assam, what is it that prevents it being done in Bengal. That is the question that I ask of this Government.

One reason of the rise in price is given as the difficulty in transport. Sir, so far as that question is concerned, I am constrained to make one observation. We are told that the present World War is a total war and that everyone has to put his shoulder to the wheel if we have to win the war. We are told so, Sir, when we are invited to do something to aid the

war efforts, but, Sir, that the whole of the Home Front is going to collapse does not seem to disturb the equanimity of the powers that be. If they apply their minds to this problem, if there is famine in this country, if there are food riots, will war efforts be impeded or helped by a situation like that? The powers that be do not seem to realise the situation at all. Now, Sir, very vitally connected with this problem is the problem of "Grow-more-food," and we were at one time encouraged to find that even this Government of Bengal talked about the problem of "Grow-more-food". But what did they do? The only thing they did was to distribute some leaflets to the members of the House and to other people probably advising them to act in a particular way. May I ask this Government whether they have done anything with regard to the culturable fallow lands in this province? According to Government figures there are lakhs of acres of uncultured but culturable fallow lands in this province. Did they raise their little finger to bring a portion of this land under cultivation, and if they did will they state on the floor of this House how many acres of land they succeeded in bringing under cultivation by their efforts in that direction? I want an answer from the Government.

Now, Sir, what the Government said about "Grow-more-food" was confined, as I have said, to the four corners of a pamphlet. We now see that they have some other plan. Now the cat is out of the bag. Their real campaign is not "Grow-more-food" but "Grow-more-jute". That is their campaign. Every one in the country is of opinion that under the present circumstances it would be suicidal to grow more jute than is absolutely necessary. The oceans are not open to us. Even the Bay of Bengal is almost closed to us. The Indian Ocean is closed to us. So also the Pacific. The Atlantic Ocean is not free from the U-boat menace. The Mediterranean is also closed. In this state of affairs the direction of the Government is that the proportion of jute to be sown should be eight annas. (A VOICE: When did they issue this notification?) That is another question. I am not now dealing with the jute question. There are other matters connected with this problem which I think I should not discuss in the course of this debate. But I should like to point out that aspect of the matter which is directly connected with the present subject, viz., if jute is grown in the proportion of eight annas, then will not that impede the "Grow-more-food" campaign of the Government of Bengal? No one can deny that. Not only that, but the cultivators will be ruined. The price of jute will be very low during the coming season on account of this decision of the Government of Bengal and they will have to sell jute almost at no price and to purchase paddy at an exorbitant price. That will be the plight of the cultivators. I do not know whether the Progressive Coalition Party in whose hands actually lies the destiny of this province are giving their thought to this matter and whether they are putting pressure on their Government to do things rightly. However, it is their concern. Probably the Government will give a reply that so far as the jute question is concerned it is an all-India affair and war effort is likely to be impeded if there is less jute. Therefore, they could not but abide by the instructions of higher authorities in this matter. If they say so, they should abdicate

from their position. That is our demand. This however reminds me of an amusing definition in the book of a reputed Bengalee author. In this book, "Matrimonial Penal Code," he gave a definition of "husband." "Husband," according to this definition, is "a moving and movable property at the absolute disposal of a wife." "*Footnote*: Whether a member of the bovine species, can be a husband? No, because it sometimes asserts a will of its own." Similarly a progressive Bengal Minister can be defined. A progressive Bengal Minister is an administrator at the absolute control of—I don't fill up the gap. Whether a donkey or a mule can be a Minister? No, because that animal sometimes asserts a will of its own and kicks with its hind legs.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is your footnote!

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Yes. According to this definition, Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee was not qualified to be a progressive Bengal Minister, and it is in the fitness of things that he has come out of the Cabinet. The Ministers always come forward with the plea that there are matters in which they have no hand whatsoever, that they are being dictated to, that officers are not listening to them. Somebody is guiding them and somebody else is directing their policy. If that is their plea, I would ask this House whether they should be allowed to remain where they are at present.

Now, Sir, as regards this "Grow-more-food" problem, what are they doing? In those places where there has been a failure of crops in the last season are they making any preparations for distributing paddy seeds to the cultivators? I have referred already to the Goalundo and Sadar subdivisions of the Faridpur district. There was absolute failure of the *aus* as well as *aman* crop. The *aus* sowing season is very near at hand. They will begin to sow *aus* within a very short time. I would ask Government whether they have made any ararngements for distributing *aus* paddy seeds to the cultivators in those areas—not only in those areas but also in North Bengal and many other places where there was a similar failure of *aus* crop.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: May I draw your attention to the fact that the Minister concerned is not here?

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: If I have to recount all their deeds of omission and commission in this respect, the time at my disposal will not be sufficient. Sir, I have dealt with all the points in my amendment in the course of my speech. The last item is that Government should co-operate with the principal political parties in the province in the above matter. We have put that in the hope that probably as a last resort something may be done. I admit that nothing could be expected of the present Government. Whatever constructive advice we may give them, howsoever we may be earnest to give them help, the present Government is incapable of doing anything. So that it may not be said that we withheld our co-operation in a vital matter like this, we have offered to do what little we can to give even this apathetic Government of Bengal some help in this important matter.

With these few words, I place my amendment before the House for its acceptance.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, by way of an amendment I beg to move that this Assembly is of opinion that in order to provide for the proper distribution of paddy and rice all over the province, the Provincial Government do immediately take the following steps, namely, the ban imposed on the traders to purchase paddy and rice in——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: On a point of order, Sir. Would it not be desirable for Mr. Biswas to move his amendment to-morrow because we have not got his amendment in our hands and we do not know what its implications are?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I enquired of Mr. Biswas and Mr. Abu Hossain Sarkar when they gave notices of their amendments as to whether they intended actually to move their amendments and, if so, whether they would take up their amendments as party amendments or as amendments moved in their respective individual capacity. I agree with Dr. Sanyal that if Mr. Biswas moves his amendment as an individual amendment it would be better for the honourable members to get a copy of the amendment and in that view I think Mr. Biswas may move his amendment tomorrow.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: In that case, Sir, I would rather not move the amendment at all, but I hope you will allow me to speak on the motion generally, and I propose to give some suggestions to Government in my individual capacity.

Sir, Government have adopted a policy of monopoly purchase of food-grains all over Bengal. I understand it is the intention of Government first to purchase and then to distribute the surplus food-grains. The Government alone will purchase the same for distribution in the deficit areas, and the distribution will be done according to a definite scheme. But the purchase of the available surplus all over the province will certainly take some time, and I am afaird it will take not less than two months. And the devising of a scheme and the setting up of an organisation to work out the scheme of distribution all over the province will also take some time. Now the question is, how to meet the present situation? I would draw the attention of Government to the situation that has already arisen owing to this policy of monopoly purchase by Government. What is the system of supply prevailing in the province? In both urban and rural areas, especially the places which are known as deficit areas, honourable members of this House know that supply of paddy and rice is made through the channel of ordinary trade. It is the trade which purchases paddy and rice in places where these are available and supplies that paddy and rice to the rural and urban areas. Now, Sir, since Government have adopted the policy of monopoly purchase, Government have shut all the supplies available to the rural and urban areas through the ordinary trade channel, but the Government have not made any arrangement for supplying paddy and rice to those areas. The result has been that there has been no supply in the towns nor in the *hâts* and bazars

where the rural people purchase paddy and rice. Everybody knows that there has been a scarcity of paddy and rice in both rural and urban areas and people there are living on the meagre stock that is now available there. Consequently, prices have shot up to an abnormal height unapproachable by the poor people. If this state of things continues for some time more, I am afraid the people of deficit areas will face famine and starvation and millions will die of starvation and of diseases consequent thereto. But before they die they will at least try to commit food riots which will end in anarchy and bloodshed. The Government should remember that hunger knows no law. I appeal to Government to think seriously as to whether they should allow the present state of things to continue even for a day longer. I am speaking from personal experience in the matter, Sir, for I have in my village purchased rice recently at Rs. 14 and Rs. 15 per maund. The honourable members know that the average agriculturist of this province is a poor man. It has become impossible for him to live with his family longer if he has got to purchase his necessities at so high prices. I understand that Government have asked the people of the deficit areas to carry on for some time with the rice which is now available in those areas. Sir, I am afraid the gentleman in charge of carrying out the Government policy is not aware of the fact that there is little or no rice or paddy to be sold by the agriculturists of these deficit areas. At least 90 per cent of the agriculturists in the deficit areas have already begun to purchase rice from local *hâts* and bazars. The remaining five per cent have got some stock, but that is not sufficient to maintain them throughout the year, and that is why they are not prepared to sell their stock in the market. Consequently, no rice or paddy is available in the hand of the well-to-do agriculturists of deficit areas to be sold to meet the requirements of the rest of the people living there. Two problems are facing these people and these are the problems of supply and price. I would ask the Hon'ble Minister finally to take note of the fact that the majority of the people in the deficit areas are not getting supplies. All supplies through the free trade channel have been cut off and the Government are not coming forward with fresh supplies. If they do not get fresh supplies, how will they carry on their existence? Secondly, the shortage of supplies has been responsible for the shooting up of the prices. Such has been the situation in the deficit areas. If this state of things continues for some time more, I do not know to what height the prices of rice will rise. I beg of the Hon'ble Minister in charge to take note of these facts. Immediate efforts should be made to bring supplies at the door of the people of the deficit areas and that at a reasonable price.

Then, Sir, I am afraid the Government scheme of monopoly purchase will not succeed. Already the agents appointed by Government are meeting with difficulties to purchase rice in the places having a surplus. And why? Because the agriculturists and other stockists who are sellers of paddy and rice are not willing to sell the paddy and rice to Government agents at the price fixed. It is only natural that when there is one purchaser and there is no competition in the market, the sellers become slow to sell their goods. Instances have also been reported to the Hon'ble Minister that the Government agents have offered to the sellers of rice and paddy a price which is much

less than even the stipulated price—I mean, the controlled price. How can the Government then expect that these agents will be able to purchase rice and paddy at the controlled price? If Government fail, and, I believe, Government will fail, to purchase the entire available stock of surplus paddy and rice, then the policy of Government to control the prices after having controlled the supplies will absolutely fail because the very foundation of the whole scheme will then collapse. I am sure that there will be no control of supplies and Government will fail to control the prices. I would, therefore, request Government to remove the ban on trade. Let the trade be free to purchase, but the prices be fixed. Sir, I repeat that the ban on the traders to purchase paddy and rice in districts where they have been prohibited to purchase rice and paddy be withdrawn. Let there be free flow of supply, but I would suggest, at the same time, that the wholesale and retail prices of paddy and rice be fixed and the control of prices be made effective. So long Government could not make price-control effective because they overlooked contravention of their orders for regulation of prices. Government know that control of prices is necessary, but it is also necessary that Government should effectively control the prices with an Ordinance. Sir, that is a thing which I propose.

I would also suggest that export of rice from Bengal be prohibited. It is now admitted on all hands—even by the Government of Bengal and the Government of India—that Bengal is a deficit province. I would not deal with the percentage of deficit, but I take it that Bengal is a deficit province. If Bengal is a deficit province, no rice should be allowed to be exported from Bengal. That is a measure which we demand, and I hope Government will accede to that demand

Now, Sir, to one thing more I would draw the attention of the honourable members as also of the Hon'ble Minister. It is said that Bengal is running short of food and that is the reason why prices have risen. It may have been the cause of rise in prices, but people of Bengal know how to adjust their requirements according to supply. If the total supply is short, then the people of Bengal will know how to adjust their demands. But the people of Bengal want to see that the paddy and rice which are available within the province are freely supplied at their door right from today.

Sir, I also request the Government for giving effect to the Ordinance by which hoarding of paddy and rice in excess of a specific quantity is punishable. That is a measure which is absolutely necessary. We have found that whenever Government have adopted a policy of price-control, that policy has resulted in creating black markets. These black markets can be effectively stopped by punishing the hoarders.

Sir, with these words I am neither opposing nor supporting the motion, but I have simply given my views.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am sorry that I have not yet heard of any scheme from the Government side and for that my remarks also may be based somewhat upon imagination, so that a further

criticism may be necessary when the Government scheme, if there is any, is known. With this reservation I want to make some observations just now.

Sir, I shall not dilate upon any other subject, but I shall confine myself to a description of the state of things in my part of the province, and I shall refrain from giving any opinion as to whether the jute quota is good or bad and whether the "Grow-more-food" campaign of the Government is going to succeed or not. I shall not say how transport can be improved. All these things I shall not touch today. The situation is very grave, and I shall refer to the graveness of the situation and suggest something for the amelioration of the condition which is very emergent and which is very urgent now.

Sir, our masters do not realise that we are also men, and we in villages are subject to hunger and thirst as men in the towns. We require food as much as it is required for the honourables and dishonourables living in the city.

Our masters have minced matters and have mismanaged the whole show. In their anxiety to please their white lords, they have neglected the entire people in their charge. In the beginning we thought that the powers that be would not starve us to death. The inevitable is coming, and I have to curse our lot and, if it suits, invoke the aid of the Almighty to see a similar fate for the men in whose charge we have been confided

Sir, war has come to our door. Misfortune never comes alone, but in battalions. War has come with its evils, and God has come with His vengeance. War cut off Burma from Bengal. There is failure of crops due to inclemencies of weather in most of the districts of Bengal Bengal was and is a deficit province in food production—the Paddy and Rice Enquiry Committee has said and definitely said this. Bengal depended upon Burma for supply of food and food articles. The resources of Burma in paddy and rice will be no more available for the people of Bengal. Nature's gifts in crops have dried up in recent years. This year is the year of calamity for many districts in this respect. Our masters have ordained that Bengal must feed our friends in Ceylon, the Andamans and the Far and Near East countries on the Continent. This is urged as a point of justice and fair play or rather it is being advertised as a point of charity. Our lords forget the famous Persian couplet:— از پای بستہ چہ سیر - از دہی دست چہ خیر .
To make a run is not possible with chained legs, and charity is impossible by a man in empty hands.

Sir, there is famine in Bengal in most of the districts. People in Bengal are starving. Death is staring us in the face. Nay, the Angel of Death—we Mussalmans call him (in Persian) ملک الموت is daily embracing us in his mighty arms. Our lords decide that we must feed others—never mind—by keeping our body and soul together by taking a little morsel of food. In other countries, a revolution would be the only word and we in Bengal are helpless.

War gave us control prices as a gift from our lords—a half-hearted measure behind which there was not a brain. Nobody cared to know that control of prices would bring disaster in the absence of a regular and perennial supply, because it was impossible to have the desired effect in the absence of a reliable staff and a set of reliable merchants with clear licence and clear conditions of licence imposed on them. The inevitable came in no time. Some officers prospered and got a fortune and a few mahajans thrived and prospered also who had no scruples to adhere to. The majority of the mahajans were driven off and food and food-grains disappeared by underground and underhand means in no time.

Now, in the whole of Bengal the merchants in combination fought shy of implementing the desires of the Government officers and none was prepared to risk his good money in the apprehension of turning it into bad money.

On another side we find boats have been taken away or destroyed. Cycles have been of no use and any journey is risky. Railway wagons are not available except on payment of too heavy sums in a dishonest move. Police protection is nil. Subdivisional Officers and Districts Magistrates have no time. Daroga will not investigate theft and loot cases on the plea of their engagement for war purposes and reception of the dishonoured men. A catastrophe of the type beggars description. In short, there is no co-ordination and co-ordinated action between officers and officers, their masters below and masters above. There is none with a mind to see that the village people are fed. The villagers are in rack and ruin. People are starving. They are crying for help. They are cursing their lot and invoking the vengeance of God upon all people alike, all people alike, all people alike!

Now Rome is burning and Nero fiddling. The housewives of Bengal are busy with making propaganda and making tours in and outside the province and the object is obvious. The house-master has another mind. He will feed his own kith and kin. He will feed his men. We in villages are not his men—for that we are not children of his housewives also. We belong to nobody. The mistresses of the household have agreed to appoint Supply and Purchase Directorates—purchase for whom and supply to whom is yet unknown. The Director of Civil Supply will supply not for the civil population of Bengal. We the villagers are not civilised enough—for that we are not civilians in the estimate of the officers in charge of civil supplies. The civilians and their underlings are the men in his favour and have been accepted in the category of civil population. I had been living in a village a few days ago, and I felt the pinch of hunger. I could not procure food and food-grains. I was haunted by hungry people in their thousands. I was helpless. Now in Calcutta I am followed by a good number of them crying for help. They vexed the Hon'ble Ministers also. As a contrast the life in Calcutta is otherwise. Here no sign of food shortage is visible.

To be frank I must tell you I gave notice of the situation in the September Session. I saw the Ministers—I discussed, I put in notes. Thereafter I wrote letters one after another. I put questions in the Assembly in that

Session as well as in the present Session. The Hon'ble Mr. Banerjee, I must tell the House, tried to give some relief from his department, but the Nawab Bahadur in charge of Supplies had not a word to say in correspondence or in answer. "The Nawab Bahadur shall better suit as a Badshah than as a Minister" was a point of humour by a colleague of his when we were in the midst of a joint conference, but that stung me to the quick. I readily realised that the Hon'ble Nawab had no time to spare over the small subject of supply. (In Persian) رزی چنان شہریاری چنین So he made a mess of the whole thing.

Some districts of Bengal say Barisal, Khulna, and most of the districts of North Bengal, probably Noakhali, Burdwan and Bankura, got a surplus of production in paddy. The Nawab Bahadur in his speech assured that systematically distributed there would be no shortage of food anywhere in the province. Then why are the people of Faridpur, Dacca, Nadia, Jessore dying of starvation? Barring Noakhali and Barisal other districts of East Bengal are not getting their two square meals a day. Government have no fixed policy to follow. Government orders are issued without forethought, orders are changed without notice, and modified a third time without a margin of time! Merchants spend time in getting licences and permits. They run from district to district, but always to their disappointment. No purchase is allowed in any part of Bengal for any district outside the limits of the district of production. Ultimately on an enquiry it has been revealed to me only the day before yesterday by the Nawab Bahadur himself that he had issued orders last of all that the Purchase Officer will make purchases and no other merchants will be allowed to make any purchase anywhere. Why this belated order and why such an order at a time when disastrous conditions have already set in? I cannot see any sense in the order when people are already starving.

Then, Sir, if Government wanted to make any arrangement by themselves they should have taken the responsibility beforehand; they should have arranged for purchase and supply simultaneously and by now the machinery for supplies should have been working in right earnest in the districts. Brain is the essence of the man. I yet doubt if the brain with the Government is yet applied and attempt is made to supply articles of food to places where starvation and death have started already in heavy proportion. No more of game is permissible and no more of change of orders and no more of shilly-shallying will do. I yet believe that the Secretariat has not adopted any definite scheme to supply food to the people of Bengal—I mean to the teeming millions who are starving in the villages.

With these words I support the motion of Mr. Tamizuddin.

Here my story endeth,
The natia thorn withereth,
Why O' natia dost thou wither?
Why doth the cow browse on me?
Why O' cow dost thou browse on the thorn?
Why doth the neat-herd not tend me?

Why O' neat-herd dost thou not tend the cow?
Why doth the housewife not give me food?
Why O' housewife dost thou not give food to the neat-herd?
Why doth my child cry?
Why O' child dost thou cry?
Why doth the ant bite me?
Why O' ant dost thou bite?
Kut, Kut, Kut.

This is the reply, Sir. Here I am asking you to awake and arise or be for ever fallen.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: মাননীয় সভাপতি মহাশয়, সরকারের দুরদর্শিতার অভাবে আজিকার এই পরিস্থিতির উদ্ভব তাহা বহু পূর্ব্ব হইতেই আমরা আশঙ্কা করিয়াছিলাম। গত বৎসর যখন আমরা জিজ্ঞাসা করিয়াছিলাম বাংলা প্রদেশের খাদ্য সমস্যার সমাধানের কি ব্যবস্থা হইতেছে এবং ধান চাউল প্রভৃতি পণ্যের সরবরাহের সুব্যবস্থা হইয়াছে কিনা এবং কি পরিমাণ শষ্য উৎপাদন হইয়াছে তখন সরকার পক্ষ হইতে বলা হইয়াছিল বাংলাদেশে প্রচুর পরিমাণে ধান্য এবং চাউল জমা আছে, কোন চিন্তার কারণ নাই। কিন্তু দুঃখের বিষয় কয়েক মাস যাইতে না যাইতেই দেখা গেল যে সরকার বাহাদুর বলিতে লাগিলেন সাবধান হও খাদ্যের অভাব দেখা গিয়াছে। গত বৎসর বহু আগেই জানা ছিল যে Burma হইতে শুধু তৈল নয় চাউলের আমদানীও বন্ধ হইয়া যাইবে। সে সম্বন্ধে কোন ব্যবস্থা করা হইল না। ইহা শুধু অদূরদর্শিতার পরিচয় নয় ইহা সম্পূর্ণ অবহেলার পরিচয়। ইহা যে অবহেলার পরিচয় তাহা গভর্ণমেণ্টের পক্ষ হইতে আনীত motion হইতেই বোঝা যায় "This Assembly do take into consideration the present situation" কিন্তু আশা করিয়াছিলাম এই situation এর কথা বহু পুরাতন লিষ্টে চলিয়া যাইবে। সরকার পক্ষ হইতে এমন একটা scheme পরিকল্পনা প্রচার করা হইবে যাহার উপর সকল পক্ষ একত্রিত হইয়া আলোচনা করিয়া বিবেচনা করিয়া সুচিন্তার সহিত স্থির করা হইবে বাংলার কৃষক প্রজার জন্য কি করা যাইতে পারে। যাহারা কৃষক প্রজার দরদী সাজিয়া এই পরিষদে আসিয়াছেন এবং যাহারা কৃষক প্রজার ডাল ভাতের সমস্যার সমাধানের ব্যবস্থা করিবেন বলিয়া প্রতিশ্রুতি দিয়াছিলেন তাহারা আজ কি করিতেছেন? আজ সেই কৃষককুল দ্বারে দ্বারে ঘুরিয়া বেড়াইতেছে এবং হাটে হাটে লুঠতরাজ করিতেছে। তাদের এই অবহেলা আরও পরিস্ফুট হইয়া উঠিয়াছে আজ—আজ যখন এই প্রধান সমস্যা—এই স্থলে আলোচিত হইতেছে সেই সময় মন্ত্রীমণ্ডলীর প্রায় সকলেই এখান হইতে চলিয়া গিয়াছেন এবং কৃষক প্রজা দরদী কেহ এখানে উপস্থিত নাই। আমার বন্ধু মৃধা সাহেব বলিয়া গিয়াছেন "when Rome was burning, Nero was fiddling" আজও এখানে এই কথাই সত্য। যখন কৃষক প্রজাদের আনু সংস্থানের সম্বন্ধে আলোচনা হইতেছে তখন কৃষক প্রজা দরদী মেম্বরগণ বাহিরে দরখাস্ত সহি করাইয়া বেড়াইতেছেন, তাহাদের ভাতা বাড়ুক, তাহাদের মাহিনা দেড়শ টাকা হইতে আড়াইশ টাকা হউক। এই অবস্থায় আমরা সরকার পক্ষ হইতে কিছু আশা করিতে পারি না। আরও কারণ আছে। মাননীয় ডক্টর শ্যামাপ্রসাদ বলিয়াছিলেন—

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Mr. Chairman, an imputation has been made——

Mr. CHAIRMAN (Mr. David Hindley): Are you on a point of order?

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Sir, an imputation has been made against the Krishak Proja Party that some of its members are getting a petition filed to increase their salaries and daily allowances. This is a reflection on our party. On behalf of the party, I repudiate very strongly that suggestion, and I say that no member is getting any such petition signed outside the House.

Mr. K. SHAHABUDDIN: On a point of order, or on a point of privilege, Sir. A very important statement has been made by Dr. Abdul Motaleb Malik that members of the Government Party are getting certain petitions signed with a view to getting the salary and daily allowance of the Assembly members enhanced, against which Mr. Abu Hossain Sarkar has been forced to record his protest. I think that the House should record it that as far as the members on this side of the House are concerned, we are no party to such an effort and we absolutely dissociate ourselves from any such move.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I shall give a ruling in due course.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: মাননীয় ডক্টর শ্যামাপ্রসাদ বলিয়াছিলেন যে মেদিনীপুরে দিনে সাহায্য দান করা হয় এবং রাত্রে তাহাদের গৃহ লুট করিবার অধিকার দেওয়া হয়। ঠিক তদনুরূপ ঘটিতেছে বাংলার গ্রামে গ্রামে। দিনে তাহাদের খাদ্যের কোন সংস্থান করা হয় না, রাত্রে যদি তাহারা পেটের ক্ষুধায় কোথাও যাইয়া অন্নের সংস্থানের ব্যবস্থা করে সরকার তাদের মাপ করেন না। সরকার বলেন না অভাবে পড়িয়া গুরুতর করিয়াছে তোমাদের মাপ করা গেল। সরকার তাহাদের উপর আরও বেশী উৎপীড়ন করেন। ডাক্তার নলীনাক্ষ সান্যাল এবং তমীজুদ্দীন সাহেব policy এবং economic scheme ইত্যাদি সম্বন্ধে আলোচনা করিয়াছেন। আমি সামান্য পল্লীর অধিবাসী হিসাবে দু একটি কথা বলিয়া ক্ষান্ত হইব। এই সমস্ত গ্রাম যেখান হইতে আমরা আসিয়াছি সেই সমস্ত গ্রামে কৃষক প্রজাদের দৈনিক আয় দুই আনা কিম্বা তিন আনার বেশী নয়। সেই খানে চাউলের দাম হইতেছে বর্তমানে ১৫।১৬৲ টাকা। সেখানে কেরোসিন তৈলের এক পাঁইটের দাম হইতেছে ১৪ আনা হইতে এক টাকা যদিও সরকার পক্ষ হইতে বলা হয় price control করা হইয়াছে। দুঃখের বিষয় এই price control system এত বেশী corruptionএ পরিপূর্ণ হইয়াছে, এত বেশী ব্যাভিচার এবং অন্যায় চলিতেছে যে তাহা ভাষায় বর্ণনা করা যায় না। এই সকল control shop মন্ত্রীমহোদয়গণের নিজেদের আত্মীয়স্বজন এবং তাঁহাদের পৃষ্ঠপোষক নেতৃবর্গের আত্মীয়স্বজনদের দেওয়া হয় এইরূপ প্রমাণ পাওয়া গিয়াছে। বেনামীতে মন্ত্রীমহোদয়গণের অনেকের এই সমস্ত দোকানে অংশ আছে। তাঁহাদের আত্মীয়স্বজনের দ্বারা এই সমস্ত দোকান পরিচালনা করা হয়। শুধু মন্ত্রীমহোদয়গণ নহেন তাঁহাদের অনুগত officials দের আত্মীয়স্বজনদের বেনামীতেও দোকান চালান হইয়া থাকে। একথা বাংলার আকাশে বাতাসে প্রত্যেক যায়গায়—একথা শোনা গিয়াছে যে কিছু সেলামি না দিলে ঘরে ঢোকা যায় না permission পরের কথা। মন্ত্রীমহোদয় হইতে উর্দ্ধতন কর্মচারী হইতে নিম্ন দিকে S.D.O., Circle Officer পর্য্যন্ত যাহাদের হাতে সামান্য ক্ষমতা আছে তাহাদের প্রত্যেকেরই জমি বাড়ী Bank balance দিন দিন বাড়িয়া চলিতেছে। পুরাতন system অকর্মণ্য বলিয়া বিবেচিত হইবার পর নূতন system আরম্ভ হইয়াছে যাহার দ্বারা এক জেলা হইতে অন্য জেলায় এক প্রদেশ হইতে অন্য প্রদেশে পণ্য

দ্রব্যাদি লইয়া যাইবার ব্যবস্থা সঙ্কোচিত করা হইয়াছে এবং এরূপ চিন্তা না করিয়া করা হইয়াছে যাহাতে এরূপ স্থান মহকুমা এবং জেলা আছে যেখানে অভাব অনটনের সৃষ্টি হইবে। আজ নিজের মহকুমা হইতে খবর পাইতেছি সেখানে যে পরিমাণ চাউল আছে তাহাতে সমস্ত মহকুমায় এক সপ্তাহের বেশী চলিতে পারে না। যাঁহারা যশোহর এবং বরিশাল হইতে ধান্য আমদানী করিবার চেষ্টা করিয়াছিলেন তাঁহাদের আবেদন গ্রাহ্য করা হয় নাই। ঢাকা এবং নারায়ণগঞ্জে কয়েকদিন আগে পর্য্যন্ত মাত্র ৬ লক্ষ মণ চাউল ছিল। ঐ চাউল যদি ঢাকা এবং নারায়ণগঞ্জে খালি হইয়া যায় তাহা হইলে পনের দিনের বেশী চলিতে পারে না। ঢাকা হইতে বরিশালে গিয়া ব্যবসায়ীরা ধান্য চাউল আনিবার চেষ্টা করিয়াছিলেন। এই রকম [illegible] ২০০ নৌকা ফিরাইয়া দেওয়া হইয়াছে একটুও চাউল দেওয়া হয় নাই। ইহার ফলে অত্যন্ত সত্বর দুঃখ দেখা দিবে। আরও মর্ম্মন্তুদ এবং সাংঘাতিক ব্যবস্থা করা হইয়াছে যাহা শুনিলে প্রাণ শিহরিয়া উঠে। মাননীয় ডক্টর শ্যামাপ্রসাদ মুখোপাধ্যায় বলিয়াছিলেন মেদিনীপুরে সাহায্যের সময় হিন্দু মুসলমান কথা ভুলিয়া যাও। আজ ঐ সময়ই শোনা যাইতেছে control shop বিলি করিবার সময় মুসলমানদের দেওয়া হয় না। যে সব যায়গায় হিন্দু officer আছেন সেখানে মুসলমানদের licence দেওয়া হয় না। ইহার প্রমাণ আছে। একস্থানে যেখানে মুসলমান দোকানদারেরা আগে চিনি, কেরোসিন তৈল রাখিত, জনৈক হিন্দু officer সেখানে যাওয়ার পর তাহাদের licence কাটিয়া দেওয়া হয়। আমার নিজের অভিজ্ঞতা আছে কোন এক স্থানের সেখানে S.D.O. মুসলমান ব্যবসায়ীদের দরখাস্ত অগ্রাহ্য করিয়া সমস্ত চিনি, তৈল হিন্দুদের দিয়াছিল। আমরা তাহাতে আপত্তি করি এবং বলি ঐ সমস্ত পণ্য দ্রব্যাদি সমানভাবে হিন্দু মুসলমান ব্যবসায়ীদের ভিতর বিতরণ করা হউক। কিন্তু দুঃখের বিষয় তিনি তাহা করেন নাই। এ সম্বন্ধে আমার ব্যক্তিগত অভিজ্ঞতা আছে। যখন এই সমস্ত খুচরা দোকানে মুসলমানরা বোতল হাতে করিয়া ঠোঙ্গা হাতে করিয়া চিনি বা কেরোসিন তৈল আনিতে যাইত তখন তাহাদের বলা হইত তৈল নাই চিনি নাই। অন্য সময়ে ঐ সকল জিনিষ হিন্দু ভাইদের দেওয়া হইত। আমি সাম্প্রদায়িক কোলাহলের জন্য এই প্রশ্ন উত্থাপন করিতেছি না। ইহা দুঃখের বিষয় বলিয়া উত্থাপন করিতেছি। আমি আর একটা point বলিয়া ক্ষান্ত হইব। মফঃস্বলের officer গণ Black market এ যাহারা উচ্চ দরে চাউল চিনি, তৈল, প্রভৃতি বিক্রয় করে তাহাদের বিচার না করিয়া ছাড়িয়া দেন কেন জানি না। এ সম্পর্কে গভর্ণমেণ্টের আশু কর্ত্তব্য আছে। তারপর খুচরা দোকানদারেরা যখন licence আনিতে যায় তখন তাহাদের নিকট হইতে subscription তোলা হয়। আমি আর বেশী বিলিতে চাই না। আমি এই কয়টি কথা বলিয়া ডক্টর নলিনাক্ষ সান্যাল যে প্রস্তাব আনিয়াছেন তাহা সমর্থন করিতেছি।

Mr. ABDUL WAHAB KHAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, as the food problem is now uppermost in the mind of every one inside and outside this House, at the outset we should like to know from Government what are the normal requirements of the province and, if possible, district by district, and the total quantity of rice that may be available this year and what measures Government propose to take or have taken to meet the deficit. We also want to know on what basis or on what figures, obtained from which sources, a district is declared to be a surplus or deficit district? And if it is on the basis of forecast made by the Agriculture Department, may we know, Sir, when was that forecast made, and whether Government have taken into account any subsequent events such as damages due to weather conditions or insects? It is true that only the surplus crop of an area

should be allowed to move from one area to another and only the surplus crop would be purchased by the Government or by any agency of the Government. I would like to tell the House that there is a fallacy involved in this: If basis of figures to determine the surplus yield is wrong, the conclusions arrived at therefrom must also be wrong, and there is a great danger involved. I admit the problem is a difficult one, and it has to be tackled if Bengal is to be saved. The masses must have the right to claim, even under abnormal circumstances, to the extent, which an ordinary human being has a right to claim. We should ask the Government to tell the House as to how they propose to maintain the self-sufficiency of the province and also an equilibrium in the prices of all food-stuffs and articles such as rice, *dal*, fuel, etc. It is true that a certain amount of interprovincial co-operation and co-ordination in the matter of production and supply will be necessary. The Government of India have set up a Food Advisory Council. So, in my opinion, this province also should set up a Committee of this House or of the Legislatures to pool, study, and disseminate all information regarding food, to plan a food programme for the different parts of the province and tender advice as to its executives to advise authorities about the equitable distribution of the available foodstuffs. It is an irony of fate that the primary producer—the man behind the plough—is sometimes forgotten amidst the clamours for food for urban area. Ordinarily a cultivator has no surplus yield. Whatever he gets he sells for his pressing debts at the price dictated by Government or by the purchasing agencies of the Government who monopolise the market. As regards these agencies we have been hearing about purchase on behalf of the Government. I would say that this agency must not be a particular individual or individuals, but, to my mind, should be an organisation on a co-operative basis who would not have the greed for profiteering at the cost of the poor growers or consumers. The central banks, other banks and rural societies would come to take up the work, if the Government encourage them and render all possible assistance to them. In denial areas of the province transport facilities by boat being unavailable the prices the cultivators get are too low. Now, Sir, we do not want the Government or their agents to remove rice from these areas, for where is the guarantee that Government will be able to give food to these poor starving masses in the distant country-side or that rice would be available to them when there would be inevitable dearth of rice? We know, Sir, that dealers have been rightly prohibited to hoard rice on pain of confiscation. They are going to do it this year. Last year there was a large stock of rice particularly in Baga, a big rice mart in my native district Bakarganj, and this rice was seized and made available to the people of Barisal. And, Sir this is how the September food crisis in my district was saved. There is no hope of getting seized rice and as such history would not repeat itself. A more serious crisis would begin much earlier this year, and it has already begun in some of the districts. I am afraid, if once rice is removed out of a district how far it would be again available to the masses. What I would suggest is this, that it would be of

greater advantage to the peasants if the supply methods are organised locally through the help of co-operative organisations. It is true, a province-wide organisation cannot be made by a few officers of the Supply Department, but there is an army of officers in the Co-operative Department and the Jute Regulation Department which is also supposed to do rural reconstruction work. If, Sir, people have no food, what would be the meaning of rural reconstruction work. By co-ordination of work of the officers under these departments Government can do wonderful work; and if they mean business, as we were told by the Hon'ble Finance Minister in his speech while placing the budget, what I propose is this, Government do immediately take necessary steps to organise one or more co-operative societies in each and every union or municipal area of the province in order to store foodstuffs and other essential commodities to ensure supply to the people at a cheaper rate. This will make these local units more or less self-sufficient. It may be, we may not be able to solve sixteen annas problem, but I feel sure that we should be able to solve the problem to some extent. In Bakarganj we have already commenced work in this direction, and some co-operative societies or co-operative organisations with by-laws approved by the department have already started work with a capital raised from the people in which the poorest cultivator will have a minimum share of two rupees and local big men and mahajans a share of Rs. 500 or more. Government can render, all possible help, even financial assistance in the shape of interest-free loan to these co-operative organisations. If Government through their officers undertake to check and control or supervise the work of these organisations, the richer people will feel inclined to invest their money if they get an assurance that their money would go back to them. Capital for starting these societies would not be wanting in Bengal. After last year's experience of food crisis people have now realised that there would be greater dearth of rice this year. The time is fast coming when they might not get a grain of rice, although they might have money at their disposal. They are ready now to provide and find out money for a local cheaper store for their own consumption. The Barisal Municipality has already started one cheaper store for the urban area. Government can very well take advantage of this spirit of the time. If the Government make vigorous efforts in this direction, it may be that Government might not have to render any financial assistance even. Let the District Officer of each and every district make vigorous attempts in this direction, and I feel sure the result will be amazingly successful. The local officers know very well the sources to be tapped and there are plenty of men and non-official agencies to co-operate with Government in a matter like this. The union boards and the district boards can be well utilised for this purpose. Once the officers talk heart to heart with the people and they are made to feel that it is intended for their own good, they will readily respond.

This "Consumers' Co-operative Cheaper Food Store," or whatever you may call it, can to some extent control the market prices also. The cheaper rate at which the co-operative organisation would sell is bound to have repercussions on the market prices also. The people will have a sense of security.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Abdul Wahab Khan, can you finish in five minutes?

Mr. ABDUL WAHAB KHAN: No, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: In that case I will have to adjourn the House and after adjournment you will get ten minutes to finish your speech.

(At this stage the House was adjourned for ten minutes.)

(After adjournment.)

Mr. ABDUL WAHAB KHAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I was submitting, in case of co-operative organisation in each union or in each municipal area people will have a sense of security against food or rice famine. A contended mass means a successful war front. It cannot be expected that a half-starved mass can co-operate with the war efforts. There is no gainsaying the fact that the food problem is largely connected with war efforts as have been already submitted by some of the honourable members of this House. Now, after this co-operative organisation, as I have already said, has been started, Government can very well take stock of the situation, and if they find actually that there is surplus, then it can be easily taken out of the district and stocked for any emergency or unforeseen calamity. The people are very really apprehensive that by a method of unlimited purchase from a district—as the the people do not know to what extent Government will purchase from the district which is supposed to be surplus—a worse situation might be created. Let each area or each district be put on its own legs to be self-sufficient.

In conclusion, Sir, I would only say that the agency of Government purchase must not be restricted to a particular set of individuals. That would be giving scope for dishonesty or corruption. Sir, at the fag end of to-day's sitting I would not take much time of the House and with these words I finish.

Srijut MANINDRA BHUSAN SINHA: আপনারা যা করুন বা না করুন বাংলার বাঙ্গালী সচিবদের একথা স্বীকার করতে হবে যে বর্ত্তমান সময়ে অন্ন ও বস্ত্র সমস্যা বাংলাদেশে সবচেয়ে সঙ্গীন হয়ে উঠেছে। জাপানী আক্রমণের চেয়েও আমার মনে হয় এই সমস্যা ভীষণ। এমন অবস্থা দাঁড়িয়েছে যে গরীবদের কথা দূরে থাক মধ্যবিত্ত গৃহস্থের সংসার যাত্রা নির্ব্বাহ করা দুরূহ হয়ে উঠেছে। আগে টাকায় ৫/৬ সের চাউল মিলত, এখন সেই জায়গায় /২ সের কি /২॥. সের তার বেশী মেলে না। তাও এই সময়ে। পৌষ কি মাঘ মাসে যখন নূতন ধান ওঠে তখন সাধারণতঃ আমরা দেখতে পাই চাউলের দাম সস্তা হয়। এ বছর ঠিক তার উল্টো। কিছু দিন পরে টাকায় ১ সের চাউল হবে কি না তা ভবিতব্যতাই জানেন। সঙ্গে সঙ্গে আটা, নুন, গুড়, চিনি, কয়লা, জ্বালানি কাঠ—সব কিছু নিত্য ব্যবহার্য্য দ্রব্যের মূল্য উত্তরোত্তর বেড়ে চলেছে। আটা ৫৲ টাকা থেকে ২০৲ টাকা মণ বিক্রী হচ্ছে। এ শুধু সহরে নয়, মফস্বলেও তাই। কয়লার মণ ছিল ।০ আনা আমার জেলায়—যে জেলায় ২০।৩০ মাইলের মধ্যে কয়লার খনি এবং অফুরন্ত কয়লা

সেখানেই ১, ১।০, ১।।০ টাকা দিয়ে করলা কিন্‌তে হয়। তাও পাওয়া যায় না। আবার আমাদের দেশে কিছু জঙ্গল ছিল, কিন্তু Forest Departmentএর এমনই ব্যবস্থা যে তাঁর deforestation দ্রুতভাবে করেছেন যে তার ফলে জ্বালানী কাঠ পর্য্যন্ত মেলে না। তরীতরকারী—তারও দর আগুন। আলু যেটা নিত্য ব্যবহার করতে হয় এবং না হলে চলেনা তার দর যথেষ্ট। খাদ্যশস্য বেশী কোরে উৎপাদনের জন্য সরকার থেকে আন্দোলন হয় সত্য কিন্তু সে কেবল কাগজে। চাষের সুযোগ-সুবিধা না থাকলে চাষ বাড়াও বোলে চীৎকার করলে চাষ বাড়বে না, বাড়েও না। এর উপর কাপড়ের দাম এতবেশী চড়ে গেছে যে লজ্জা নিবারণের জন্য কাপড় সংগ্রহ করা কষ্টকর কেন অসাধ্য হয়ে পড়েছে। যেখানে ২ টাকায় আগে জোড়া পাওয়া যেত এখন সেখানে তার দাম ৪ গুণ কি ৫ গুণ। না খেয়ে না পরে ছেলে-মেয়েদের উপবাসী ও অনাবৃত রেখে বেঁচে থাকার মত বিড়ম্বনা আর কিছুই হ'তে পারে না। বরং জাপানী বোমায় যদি মৃত্যু ঘটে তাও শ্রেয়ঃ ও প্রেয়ঃ। এইত অবস্থা। এর প্রতীকারের ভার যাঁদের হাতে তাঁরা সক্রিয় কি আর কিছু ভাবগতিক দেখে তা টের পাবার জো নাই। যাঁরা এই অবস্থার জন্য দায়ী এই অবস্থার প্রতীকারের দায়িত্ব তাঁদেরও নিতে হবে। মন দিয়ে সহানুভূতি দিয়ে এই দায়িত্ব পালন কর্‌তে হবে। সমস্যা অবশ্য সরল বা সোজা নয় তা জানি। কিন্তু জটিল হ'লেও মনুষ্য বুদ্ধি বা চেষ্টার অতীত নয়। শুধু মূল্য নিয়ন্ত্রণ ক'র্‌লে চলবে না, দেখ্‌তে হবে লোকে সে দামে জিনিষ পাচ্ছে কি না, দেখ্‌তে হবে প্রত্যেক স্থানে যথেষ্ট খাদ্য আছে কি না এবং না থাক্‌লে আমদানী কর্‌তে হবে। ৮ই আগষ্ট তারিখে কংগ্রেস কর্ম্মীদের আটক করবার জন্য সরকার যে অতুলনীয় ক্ষিপ্রতা, কুশলতা ও তৎপরতা দেখিয়েছিলেন তার শতাংশের একাংশ ক্ষিপ্রতা ও কুশলতা যদি এই সমস্যা সামাধানের জন্য দেখান তাহলে এ দেশের লোক তাঁদের কাছে কথঞ্চিৎ ঋণী হ'তে পার্‌বে। যে অবস্থা দাঁড়িয়েছে তাতে দেখবেন যে অতি অল্পকালের মধ্যেই অন্তর্বিদ্রোহ ঘটবে, food riot প্রত্যেক স্থানে আরম্ভ হবে, তখন পুলিশ দিয়ে সেটা আট্‌কে রাখ্‌তে পারা যাবে না। এ চিন্তাটা কর্‌তে হবে। তবে বোধ হয় আমাদের বিদেশী গভর্ণমেণ্টের ধারণা যে এ জাতি ম'রে গেলেই ভাল, তা জাপানী বোমাতেই মরুক আর না হয় অনাহারে থেকে মরুক। কিন্তু এ জাতি মর্‌বে না, এ জাতি বাঁচ্‌বে। আমি আর একটী কথা বলে বক্তব্য শেষ ক'র্‌ব। এই মরা হাড় দধীচির অস্থি, এ থেকে বজ্র উৎপাদন হবে এবং যদি এর কোন ব্যবস্থা না হয় সেই বজ্র এই বিদেশী গভর্ণমেণ্টের উপরই পড়বে।

Adjournment.

The House was then adjourned at 7 p.m. till 4 p.m. on Thursday, the 18th February, 1943, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the Provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Thursday, the 18th February, 1943, at 4 p.m.

Present:

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. SYED JALALUDDIN HASHEMY) in the Chair, 8 Hon'ble Ministers and 196 members.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Transfer of Superintendent of Excise, Darjeeling.

*34. **Mr. DAMBER SINGH GURUNG:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Forest and Excise Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the order of transference of Superintendent of Excise, Darjeeling, was twice cancelled?

(*b*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason thereof?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the date since when the present Superintendent of Excise has been in Darjeeling; and

(*ii*) whether any other Superintendent of Excise was ever allowed to stay in Darjeeling for more than three years?

MINISTER in charge of the FOREST and EXCISE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Upendra Nath Barman): (*a*) The order was cancelled once only.

(*b*) The interest of the public service.

(*c*) (*i*) The 10th October, 1938.

(*ii*) Yes.

Appointment of Special Officers.

*35. **Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Finance Department be pleased to state whether any new appointment of Special Officers has been made in the Secretariat since the assumption of office by the present Ministry?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing—

(1) the number of officers so appointed and the functions they are to perform;

(2) the name of those appointed; and

(3) the respective remuneration drawn by each of them?

MINISTER in charge of the FINANCE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) It is not certain what appointments the expression "Special Officers" used by the honourable member is intended to include. A statement covering all new appointments made in the Secretariat by the present Ministry between the 12th December, 1941, and 30th September, 1942, has been laid on the Library Table.

Ramzan Holiday.

*38. **Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ:** Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Finance Department considering the desirability of making arrangement for declaring the last ten days of the holy month of Ramzan as holidays?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: No such proposal is under consideration of Government.

Dearness allowance to Government servants.

*37. **Mr. AMRITA LAL MANDAL:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Finance Department aware of the abnormal rise of the prices of all the commodities and foodstuffs?

(*b*) If so, do the Government contemplate a further increase in the dearness allowance to the employees under them who are drawing salary up to the limit of Rs.300 per month?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the rate of increase contemplated?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) No.

(*c*) Does not arise.

Amount paid to newspapers by Government for advertisement.

*38. **Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Publicity Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) the names of newspapers of Calcutta in which Government advertisements are generally published;

(*b*) the rates for publication of advertisements paid by Government to each of the following newspapers:—

(1) the daily *Azad*,
(2) the daily *Navayug*,
(3) the daily *Amritabazar*,
(4) the *Anandabazar*, and
(5) the daily *Statesman*;

(*c*) what is the amount that has been paid to each of these papers during the period from the 1st of December, 1941, to 31st August, 1942; and

(*d*) what is the circulation number of the abovementioned papers?

MINISTER in charge of the PUBLICITY DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq): (*a*) Government advertisements are generally published in all the leading newspapers and occasionally in other newspapers also.

(*b*) (1) Rs.3 per column inch per insertion.

(2) to (4) Rs.6 per column inch per insertion.

(5) Rs.12 per single column inch per insertion.

(*c*) It will take some time to obtain the information desired by the honourable member. For the financial year 1941-42, the figures were—

	Rs.
(1) The daily *Azad*	... 6,638
(2) The daily *Navayuga*	... 3,257
(3) The daily *Amrita Bazar Patrika*	... 8,615
(4) The *Ananda Bazar Patrika*	5,016
(5) The daily *Statesman*	... 11,243

(*d*) I am asking the Managers of the papers whether they are prepared to give me the figures and whether they have any objection to my communicating the information to the Legislature.

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason why the rate for publication of Government advertisements is less in the case of the "Azad" than in the case of "Navayug"? Why is this differential treatment?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I notice the fact that the rate is low. I shall enquire and let the honourable member know later. I cannot answer off-hand.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when the "Navayug" was started?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: September, 1941.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Then the figure of Rs. 3,257 relates to the payment to the "Navayug" for less than 6 months.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: It was a weekly paper and subsequently converted into a daily.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: If the figures quoted are for the financial year 1941-42 it means from April, 1941, to March, 1942. Am I to understand that?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: It may not be September; it may be August. It is certain that it is not one full year.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Then it means that the payment to the daily "Navayug" of Rs. 3,257 is only for 6 months whereas the payment of Rs. 6,638 to the daily "Azad" is for one year.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I may not be quite correct in regard to the date.

***Khan Bahadur* MOHAMMED ALI:** The payment to the "Navayug" is much more than the payment to the "Azad".

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: No, no.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Yes, it is almost double. The rates are there. In the case of the "Navayug" it is Rs. 6 per inch whereas in the case of the "Azad" it is only Rs. 3. It means that payment to the "Navayug" is double that paid to the "Azad".

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The amount is less than half, but it comes to a higher figure because the rate is higher. I have already promised to find out why the rate is more in the case of the "Navayug".

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: That is because it is a more respectable paper.

Mr. K. NOORUDDIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the "Navayug" is a semi-Government paper or whether it is under its patronage?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: It has nothing to do with Government. It is *azad*, independent.

Mr. K. NOORUDDIN: Is the "Navayug" under the patronage of the Hon'ble Chief Minister?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The Chief Minister has nothing to do with it.

Mr. K. NOORUDDIN: Will the Hon'ble Chief Minister be pleased to state whether he founded the paper and is associated with it?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: It was founded by Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq, and not by the Hon'ble Chief Minister.

Mr. M. A. H. ISPAHANI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq is financially connected with the "Navayug" or in any way connected with that paper?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq has no finance of his own and he is not financing the paper.

Removal of Chairman, Faridpur District Board.

***39. Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state the reasons which led to the removal of the Chairman of the District Board of Faridpur?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the Divisional Commissioner was directed to conduct an enquiry into the administration of the Board?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Divisional Commissioner submitted to Government any report of the enquiry?

(*d*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to lay on the Table a copy of the report?

MINISTER in charge of the PUBLIC HEALTH and LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu): (*a*) The reasons are stated in the notification, dated the 26th November, 1942, a copy of which is laid on the Table.

(*b*) No.

(*c*) and (*d*) The questions do not arise.

Notification referred to in clause (a) of starred question No. 39.

GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT.

LOCAL BOARDS.

NOTIFICATION.

No. 83C.-L.S.G.—26th November, 1942.—Whereas the district board of Faridpur has by a resolution passed at a special meeting held on the 28th October, 1942, applied, under section 28 of the Bengal Local Self-Government Act of 1885 (Bengal Act III of 1885), for the removal of Maulvi Yusuf Ali Choudhury, M.L.A., from his office as Chairman of the said district board on the ground that he persistently neglects his duties as Chairman;

And whereas the Governor is satisfied that the said Chairman of the Faridpur district board has been guilty of persistent negligence in the performance of his duties;

Now, therefore, in exercise of the power conferred by section 28 of the said Act, the Governor is pleased to remove Maulvi Yusuf Ali Choudhury, M.L.A., from his office as Chairman of the Faridpur district board with effect from the date of publication of this notification in the *Calcutta Gazette*.

By order of the Governor,
T. I. M. NURANNABI CHAUDHURI,
Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the Secretary to the Government of Bengal in the Local Self-Government Department sent a telegram to the Commissioner of the Dacca Division on the 8th of November, 1942, regarding the Faridpur District Board meeting held on the 28th October, 1942?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Will the honourable member please repeat the question?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the Commissioner of the Dacca Division has sent a report to the Government of Bengal in the Local Self-Government Department bearing No. 5964-J?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: What is the date and what is the No. please?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: The No. is 5964-J and it is dated 13th November, 1942.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Sir, the honourable member is giving the answer himself. Questions are intended to elicit information.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: There is a letter from the Commissioner to the Secretary to the Government in the Department of Local Self-Government, bearing that No. and date.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if in that letter the Commissioner stated that the proposal of Government to dismiss the Chairman would not be in order?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Yes, he did that.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Did the Commissioner also report that the meeting was irregular and not in order?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Yes, the Commissioner did that but he revised his opinion after seeing the legal opinion.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: May we know, Sir, who supplied this information to the honourable member who has put this supplementary question?

(No reply.)

Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Is it a fact that the Commissioner did not revise his own opinion but only gave in because of the legal opinion?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: He revised his opinion in the light of legal opinion.

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the Divisional Commissioner gave his revised opinion in writing?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Of course he did.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Sir, in the answer the Hon'ble Minister says that a special meeting was held in which the Chairman was dismissed for his persistent negligence of duty. Now, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether that special meeting which is alleged to have been held was held at the house of the District Magistrate and that no subject was given in the agenda for that District Board meeting?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: He was not dismissed. An application was made to the Government for removing him.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that the so-called meeting which is alleged to have been held was held at the house of the District Magistrate?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You are giving out information and you are not even sure whether there was a meeting or not, for you say that a so-called meeting was held. How is it possible for the Government to reply in that case?

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: Sir, the Hon'ble Minister has said that a resolution of no-confidence was received by the Government. In the course of this supplementary question it was suggested that the Commissioner said in the letter, which had been admitted by the Hon'ble Minister, that the meeting was not regular in which that resolution was passed, or in other words, the resolution was not valid.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Rahman, I would ask you to put a straight supplementary question arising out of this question.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: Sir, I was saying this in order to remind you what had happened. Now, what I am saying is this: the meeting which was held and in which the resolution was passed was an irregular meeting. Now my question is: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that the meeting was held at the residence of the District Magistrate and not at the premises of the District Board?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I do not accept the honourable member's assumption that it was an irregular meeting and an irregular resolution was passed. But as to the question as to where the meeting was held, I am not aware that it was held at the District Magistrate's house.

Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Sir, this is a very serious matter and practically the whole basis of administration of Bengal depends on it, and we want a definite answer to it. When the question of regularity of the meeting was raised, the Hon'ble Minister had said that he had legal opinion. So, Sir, it is a very pertinent question as to whether that meeting over which action was taken was held at the house of the District Magistrate of Faridpur or not.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The answer is, he does not know. And in that case, how can I help you, Sir Nazimuddin?

Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Sir, the parliamentary procedure in this case is that the Hon'ble Minister can ask for notice. I submit that on all occasions when the Minister has got no information, he must ask for notice. But if he says, "I do not know", then I must say that it is his duty to know and find out facts.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable member wants to know whether the meeting was held on that date, and I think the Hon'ble Minister should satisfy him on that point.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the Commissioner of the Dacca Division has sent a report to the Government of Bengal in the Local Self-Government Department bearing No. 5964-J?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: What is the date and what is the No. please?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: The No. is 5964-J and it is dated 13th November, 1942.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Sir, the honourable member is giving the answer himself. Questions are intended to elicit information.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: There is a letter from the Commissioner to the Secretary to the Government in the Department of Local Self-Government, bearing that No. and date.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if in that letter the Commissioner stated that the proposal of Government to dismiss the Chairman would not be in order?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Yes, he did that.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Did the Commissioner also report that the meeting was irregular and not in order?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Yes, the Commissioner did that but he revised his opinion after seeing the legal opinion.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: May we know, Sir, who supplied this information to the honourable member who has put this supplementary question?

(No reply.)

Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Is it a fact that the Commissioner did not revise his own opinion but only gave in because of the legal opinion?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: He revised his opinion in the light of legal opinion.

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the Divisional Commissioner gave his revised opinion in writing?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Of course he did.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Sir, in the answer the Hon'ble Minister says that a special meeting was held in which the Chairman was dismissed for his persistent negligence of duty. Now, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether that special meeting which is alleged to have been held was held at the house of the District Magistrate and that no subject was given in the agenda for that District Board meeting?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: He was not dismissed. An application was made to the Government for removing him.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: If you all agree, this question may be taken up next week, either on Monday or Tuesday.

Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: No, Sir, I suggest that this question be taken up today after disposing of the other questions.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: All right.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Hon'ble Mr. Basu will now answer the last question put by Mr. Tamizuddin Khan.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: The resolution which was sent by the then Chairman Maulvi Yusuf Ali Choudhury runs thus——

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Sir, my question has been misunderstood.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I shall read out the resolution which was sent to Government by Maulvi Yusuf Ali Choudhury—

"*Enclosure No. 1 Resolution.*—The District Board of Faridpur at its meeting has considered the letter from the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Local Self-Government Department, Bengal, dated the 1st October, 1942, and is of opinion that most of the charges against the District Board contained therein relate to matters that were decided and performed by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively; be it therefore resolved that this Board presses under section 28 of the Bengal Local Self-Government Act of 1885 as modified up to date for the removal of Maulvi Yusuf Ali Choudhury from his office as Chairman of the Faridpur District Board and thereby giving this Board an opportunity of removing the existing defects and functioning efficiently in future. Be it further resolved....." and so on.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: I shall repeat my question. My question was whether the proceedings say that a resolution like that was passed at that meeting.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: The report of Maulvi Yusuf Ali Choudhury certainly did not say that the resolution was passed, but the question is whether Government had materials before it to show that the proceedings were wrongly recorded.

Mr. A. M. A. Zaman : একথা কি সত্য যে ভূতপূর্ব্ব Chairmanএর অডিট রিপোর্টে অনেক কিছু গলদ বেরিয়েছে?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Yes, that is so.

Mr. K. SHAHABUDDIN: My question is very simple and direct and arises out of the reply of the Hon'ble Minister. Will the Hon'ble Minister give us a categorical answer whether the proceedings forwarded by the then Chairman Maulvi Yusuf Ali Choudhury state that the resolution which has just been read out by the Hon'ble Minister was passed in the meeting? I want to know "yes" or "no".

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Certainly "no".

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he himself made an enquiry into the allegations that are made in the report he has read out just now, regarding the truth or otherwise of the resolution, regarding the propriety of the resolution, whether the resolution was adopted or not?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I shall make one general answer to the various questions. I certainly considered all these questions referred to by the honourable member with reference to the materials before me on the file.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Did the agenda contain any figure purporting to be a motion of no confidence or want of confidence or anything of the kind?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: The agenda certainly contained something out of which this matter could legitimately arise under the rules.

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what was the subject out of which this matter arose in that particular meeting?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I will tell you. The subject which formed item 24 of the agenda and which also incidentally showed that the matter was not intended to be taken up that day by the Chairman who had arranged the agenda like this, was "to consider letter No. 1740 L.S.-G., dated the 1st October, 1942, from the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Public Health and Local Self-Government Department, to the address of the Commissioner of the Dacca Division, a copy of which has been received in this office direct from the Secretary with his memorandum No. 1742 (1) L.S.-G., dated the 1st October, 1942, and the Chairman's letter No. 1451G., dated the 5th/6th October, 1942, sent to Government by the District Magistrate, Faridpur".

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the subject was for a special meeting or an ordinary meeting?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: It was the subject for a special meeting and there was a special meeting. At that special meeting it was held that the question of removal of the Chairman could be brought up under the rules with the consent of the majority.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware of the rule that if any additional subject is brought up before the House it requires the unanimous consent of the House and not the consent of the majority of the House?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: So far as this last question is concerned, it was not an additional subject, because this matter about

removal of the Chairman directly arose out of the communication from the Local Self-Government Department for the supersession of the District Board and it did not require the unanimous support of the House.

Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED KHONDKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the resolution, namely, item No. 24, for the removal of Maulvi Yusuf Ali Choudhury, came up for discussion in an ordinary meeting?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Yes, that I shall state.

Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED KHONDKAR: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that a special meeting commenced at 2 p.m. on the 28th of October?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Yes.

Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED KHONDKAR: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that the resolution which has been read out in reply to Dr. Sanyal's question by him was moved by Mr. Gyasuddin Ahmed Choudhury at that special meeting?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Yes.

Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED KHONDKAR: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that in the proceedings it is recorded that the motion was passed by the majority of the members who have forwarded a copy of the resolution to Government?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Perfectly true.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is it the policy of the present Government not to stand in the way of the representatives of local bodies to elect their own Chairmen and other officers and to permit the removal of such officers when they lose the confidence of the majority of the members?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: That is exactly the position of the Local Government.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: With reference to his answer that the proceedings which were forwarded by Mr. Yusuf Ali Chaudhury did not show that that alleged resolution of no confidence was passed in that meeting, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state on what proceedings or resolution Government took action?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: On the proceedings of the special meeting which were sent by the majority of the members who had passed that resolution and which contained the signatures of the three Subdivisional Magistrates who voted with the majority.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: With reference to answers (*b*) and (*c*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Commissioner of the Dacca Division sent in a report regarding the meeting in which a resolution for the removal of the Chairman was reported to have been passed?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Yes, I have already said that in answer to a previous question.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: That is not my question. I am coming to my question. What was the recommendation of the Commissioner of the Division regarding the affair?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I am afraid my friend is covering the ground which has already been covered. Still I have no objection to answer. The recommendation was that the resolution should be set aside on a particular view of the rules that the Commissioner took before he had an opportunity of considering the legal opinion, and as I have said after having considered the legal opinion he revised his opinion and said that it should go through.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Commissioner has revised his opinion in writing?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Of course, he has.

Mr. A. M. A. ZAMAN: একথা কি সত্য যে খান বাহাদুর মহম্মদ আলি সাহেব একজন dismissed Chairman ছিলেন?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Khan Bahadur Mohammed Ali is not a dismissed Chairman. He resigned the office of Chairman.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Did Khan Bahadur Mohammed Ali resign because he thought that discretion was the better part of valour?

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Did the Commissioner give his opinion *suo motu* or was he written to for the purpose, and, if so, what was the date of the letter that was written to the Commissioner for revising his opinion?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: There was no letter written to the Commissioner.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Did he send any subsequent report revising his opinion?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Yes, he gave his opinion subsequent to the one that he had already given.

Srijut NARENDRA NATH DAS GUPTA: Did the present Government follow their predecessors in protecting the misdeeds of members and Chairmen of local bodies belonging to the Muslim League?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That question does not arise.

Mr. A. M. A. ZAMAN: আমি এটা জানতে চাই যে আগের গভর্ণমেণ্টের আমলে যে সব Chairman ও Vice Chairman অনেক অপকার্য্য করে গেছেন popular Government হবার পরে তাঁদের সেই সব ধরা পড়ার দরুণ এখন তাঁরা dismissed হচ্ছেন কিনা?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That question does not arise.

Mr. K. SHAHABUDDIN: The Hon'ble Minister stated just now that the action taken by Government was on the basis of the report of the proceedings sent under the signature of certain members. My question is why did not the Government wait to see whether the proceedings forwarded by the then Chairman, Mr. Yusuf Ali Choudhury, were confirmed in a subsequent meeting of the District Board? There is a meeting held practically every month. I am explaining my point so that it might be easier for the Minister to answer. My question is very simple—Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state why did the Government take action on the report of the proceedings sent by the members instead of waiting to see whether the proceedings which were sent by the then Chairman were being confirmed in a subsequent meeting or not?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: On the materials before the Government and the proceedings sent by the Chairman as well as by the majority of the members, Government felt no doubt that they should accept the version given by the majority of the members and that they should lose no time in removing the Chairman who had forfeited the confidence of the District Board.

Mr. K. SHAHABUDDIN: Arising out of the reply given by the Hon'ble Minister, would it not have been better to wait for the next meeting to find out whether the majority supported that motion or not?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Government were more than certain that the majority had supported that motion.

Removal of Chairman, Bankura District Board.

***40. Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state whether he is aware of the allegations against Government officers made in a statement issued to the Press by Khan Bahadur Dr. S. M. Siddique, M.L.A., regarding his removal by Government from office of the Chairman of the District Board of Bankura?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, are the Government considering the desirability of—

(*i*) stating the circumstances that led to the removal of the Chairman; and

(*ii*) of holding a public enquiry into the allegations?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) (*i*) Attention is invited to the Press-Note which appeared in *Hindusthan Standard* on the 22nd January, 1943, a copy has been laid on the Library Table.

(*ii*) No.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether in May, 1942, the then Chairman, Dr. Siddique, wrote a

letter to the Commissioner purporting that the Subdivisional Officer was forcing the members of the District Board to join the Progressive Party, otherwise the Chairman would be removed?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Yes.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Subdivisional Officer admitted before the District Magistrate in September last that he actually coerced and threatened the members of Dr. Siddique's party to join the Progressive Coalition Party?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: So far as an enquiry has been made into these allegations, they have been found to be untrue.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if in the Press Note issued by Government, there is any reference to the allegations made by Dr. Siddique against a Government officer who was inducing the Chairman to join the Progressive Party?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: In the Press Note all that has been said is that Government will make an enquiry into any allegation of the nature referred to because they are not aware of any such incident.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is aware that two of the members who were detained under the Defence of India Rules were allowed to participate in this meeting by telegrams?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: The release was made by the Home Department under the orders of the Additional Secretary to whom applications were made by the parties concerned and the Additional Secretary was apparently of opinion that these arrests were wholly illegal so far as the application of Defence of India Rules was concerned because no occasion arose for such arrest.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Will the Hon'ble Minister state whether the Subdivisional Officer had admitted before the District Magistrate that he gave threatening orders to Dr. Siddique?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: No.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Is the Hon'ble Minister prepared to make an enquiry of the District Magistrate whether the allegation that the Subdivisional Officer had admitted it before him is true or not?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: As I have already said a report has come to the effect that such allegations were untrue.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that those members who were released from the jail to participate in the meeting have subsequently been locked up again?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: On the other hand, the allegation was that they were put into jail in order to prevent them from voting against Dr. Siddique.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Sir, the question was whether after the release of those members in order to enable them to participate in the District Board meeting, they were re-arrested afterwards.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: They were re-arrested and the allegation was that it was done for the purpose of preventing them from attending another meeting which the Chairman had called in justification of his own conduct so that they might be prevented from attending and voting against him.

Srijut MANINDRA BHUSAN SINHA: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that these three members of the District Board were re-arrested on the 2nd December and that the Collector of Bankura, Mr. Karim, had to eat the humble pie and had to withdraw that order because it was an illegal order?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: He withdrew the order. I do not know whether he actually ate any pie or not!

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Sir, my question refers to the first arrest. Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to inform the House whether members of the Board arrested—either all or one or two—had anything to do with the looting of *hât* in that subdivision?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: The permanent officials of the Home Department, on the instructions of the local police officers, were of opinion that no such case was made out against them and there was no justification for any such suspicion.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is it a fact that the District Magistrate of that district has been acting in a manner showing distinct sympathy for the Muslim League Chairman of the district and as a result whereof he tried to put into jail some persons including a member of this Assembly in order to prevent them from exercising their votes?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: So far as that is concerned, I was reluctant to be dragged into that controversy because it related to the Home Department, but if a direct question like that is put to me, I should say that allegations were to that effect and the Home Department must have taken that into account at the time of ordering the release of these members.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Were similar allegations made against the Commissioner of the Division of being anti-Muslim?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I do not know who has made that allegation.

Srijut MANINDRA BHUSAN SINHA: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that the Subdivisional Officer of Bankura Sadar incurred the displeasure of the Collector, Mr. Karim, when the former refused to be a party to the design to help the expelled Chairman in his trouble?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I do not think that I can give you any information with regard to any such details.

Srijut MANINDRA BHUSAN SINHA: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that the Subdivisional Officer of Sadar was prohibited by express orders from the District Collector not to attend the District Board meeting while another official member, the Subdivisional Officer of Bishnupur, was allowed to attend the meeting because of his being a Muhammadan?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I do not know the reason, but the facts are correct.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Is it due to the fact that the Subdivisional Officer was actively canvassing against the Chairman that the District Magistrate had to stop him from such activities?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: The report is that he never actively canvassed against the Chairman.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister please place the report before the House or read the whole report which he has got of the enquiry into the allegations brought against the officials by Dr. Siddique?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I am not prepared to place the report which is of a confidential nature made to the Home Department.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that what he has said so long from that report is absolutely untrue and he has misled the House by not placing the facts?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order. In putting questions, the language should be temperate and decorous.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: It is untrue.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The word "untrue" is unparliamentary.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: Sir, my question has not been answered.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have not allowed that question.

Maulvi ABUL HASHIM: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how many Muslim League Chairmen of District Boards have been removed from office during his efficient administration of the Local Self-Government Department?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That question does not arise.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state that his refusal to place the report before the House or to read from that report is due to the fact that the information which was purported to be given from that report is untrue?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I have not got the report before me now. It is a matter relating to the Home Department. I have read the report.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is prepared to accept the challenge given by this party to hold a judicial enquiry into the conduct of the Government in removing the Chairman?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I am here to answer questions and not to accept or throw out challenges.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Sir, my question has not been properly answered.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I do not say whether the question is properly answered or not. I have allowed you to put one question, and I shall allow Mr. Fazlur Rahman to put another question. Thereafter I shall not allow any more supplementaries on this question.

Srijut MANINDRA BHUSAN SINHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether this act of removal of Chairman in the interests of better administration of the District Board has received the approbation of all sections of the public in the Bankura district?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Most certainly.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is prepared to place the report which, he says, that he has not in his possession today, tomorrow before the House?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I do not think that that report can be placed before the House, because it is a confidential report.

(The next question was then called.)

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: May I submit to you one thing, Sir? This is a very important question, and it affects the interests and privileges of this side of the House. You are the Deputy Speaker, Sir, and you ought to see that our interests are not in any way jeopardised.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: In my opinion sufficient supplementary questions have been put, and I cannot allow any more supplementary questions.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Sir, this question deals with the persecution of honourable members of this House and this is the only place where we can ventilate our grievances.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: All right. I shall allow one more question.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the Government are contemplating the appointment of a certain Subdivisional Officer as the Chairman?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: The matter is not in the contemplation of the Government at the present moment.

Questions relating to 18th February, 1943.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: We have got before us circulated a few questions meant for today. It would not, I think, take more than the time still left for us for questions. Would you kindly see that these questions are answered today?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It was agreed to by the Opposition, particularly by yourself and Mr. Shahabuddin, that only two or three questions would be taken up today. We are now engaged on a very important matter. I shall take up these questions and many others tomorrow. I shall devote full one hour to questions tomorrow, and I am therefore taking up the unstarred questions of today.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: On a point of order, Sir. I am grateful to you for the information that you have given to me that I had agreed to have only two or three questions placed today. That is a piece of information to me. I am not questioning your decision when you have said that. But I beg to point out that I only came to the House immediately after you came, and I never met you today.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You agreed to that course yesterday.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Yesterday I protested. If you remember, Sir, somebody else agreed. However I am not questioning your ruling. I have always felt that the number of questions outstanding is so many that it may not be possible to accommodate them all in one session.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I don't agree with you there. All the questions we have received from Government we have exhausted and we have practically no questions outstanding.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, one hour is allotted to question.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have already told you tomorrow we shall be able to deal with all the questions.

Special Motion.

Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: Sir, I——

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: One minute, please, Khan Bahadur. The Hon'ble the Leader of the House has got a statement to make and after that you will speak on the special motion.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, the question that the House has been discussing since yesterday is of vital importance and all sections of the House have——

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am sorry to interrupt you, Mr. Faslul Huq. First of all, you have got to present the Report of the Public Accounts Committee and the demand for regularisation of excess expenditure incurred in 1940-41 and also to present the supplementary estimates for 1942-43.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: On a point of order, Sir. So far as that part of the business is concerned, I submit that it cannot come in today. We have had a previous notice fixing a subsequent day for this subject. When changes have to be made in the agenda, it is the convention of the House that changes can be made to take up a question on a later date, but not on a date earlier than the date announced previously. Here we have also got the supplementary budget estimates for the current year, and I submit that it would be unfair to members to give them a surprise by putting in the supplementary budget estimates on a date not allotted for it. We had no business previously for the 17th and 18th and these dates have been allotted for the special motion. Therefore, Sir, these subjects cannot be taken up today, but the date that had already been allotted for them might be maintained.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: But there is no harm in presenting them to the House today. It will take only a couple of minutes.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: It is not a question of harm, Sir, but it comes as a surprise to the members on the floor of this House.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I do not think this has come as a surprise to the House. This was done in consultation with the chief whips of the Opposition. In the original programme we find that 18th was fixed for the presentation of the Report of the Public Accounts Committee.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: But we were supplied with another paper by the Chief Whip of the Government party.

Mr. K. SHAHABUDDIN: The other day certain suggestions were made by the Chief Whip of the Government party to Dr. Sanyal and myself when we sat together and did make certain changes. Of course, as far as my memory goes, I think Dr. Sanyal is right when he says that nothing was like this subject fixed for today.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is there any objection if I take up this subject tomorrow?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: No, Sir.

Mr. K. SHAHABUDDIN: I have no objection.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Sir, tomorrow is a non-official day, and I submit there should be no encroachment on the non-official day.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: But your whip has agreed.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: We do not agree to it, Sir. Our whip says that he agreed without knowing that it was a non-official day.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: But it will not take a long time and I will extend the usual time tomorrow by fifteen minutes.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: You know, Sir, that in this session we have only one day for non-official business, and I hope you will not permit any encroachment into that non-official day.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will compensate that by allowing more time for non-official business.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: As I was saying, Sir, this subject is of great importance and although we have allotted two days the House has not had full two days allotted to this subject because much of the time has been taken up by other business before the House. It has been represented to us that the House would welcome a further time to carry on this discussion. We are prepared to give half a day or up to two hours as early as possible in order to give more facilities to honourable members to speak on this subject. The debate therefore will not be closed today, but at least two hours more will be allotted to this debate as early as possible on a subsequent date.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: In view of this assurance of the Hon'ble the Chief Minister, may we enquire of the Hon'ble the Chief Minister, if he would advise the relevant department not to proceed with any change or propose any change in the programme of work of civil supplies, particularly in the handling of food. I understand that some changes were under contemplation or were going to be introduced yesterday. We feel that the matter of agency, direct purchase and de-control of prices in particular should receive further consideration. In view of the fact that the Hon'ble the Chief Minister wants to extend the time for discussion, I feel he would advise the department to suspend changes for some time and at least to allow the old policy to continue until the Government is in a position to know the mind of the Legislature.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I understand some action has been taken before the subject came up for discussion yesterday. I will certainly have discussions with the officers concerned, but, Sir, I cannot give any commitment on behalf of Government except that I shall see that the point of view represented by Dr. Sanyal is properly represented to them.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Am I to understand that while the Legislature was going to discuss this question or on the very day when the discussion was fixed, Government had introduced or the department had introduced certain changes and action had been taken as a result of those changes? Am I to understand, as the Hon'ble the Chief Minister has just now said, that certain action was taken yesterday?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: No, no; action was taken before the subject came up for discussion yesterday. I can say this much that no action was taken yesterday and no action will be taken now until the whole debate on this question is closed. But what action had been taken——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: But if any action was taken in anticipation of our debate, that action should be revised; I fear there have been some changes.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, I must tell the House that no action was taken in anticipation of this debate.

(At this stage the House was adjourned for ten minutes.)

(After adjournment.)

Presentation of the Report of the Public Accounts Committee.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, in pursuance of rule 114 of the Bengal Legislative Assembly Procedure Rules, I beg to present to the Bengal Legislative Assembly the Report of the Committee on Public Accounts on the Appropriation Accounts and Finance Accounts of the Government of Bengal for the year 1940-41 and the Audit Reports thereon.

Presentation of the demand for regularisation of excess expenditure incurred in 1940-41.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, I beg to present to the Assembly the demand of expenditure in excess of grants and appropriations in 1940-41. The excesses occurred under five heads:—

(*a*) Jails and Convict Settlements,

(*b*) Interest-free Advances,

(*c*) Veterinary,

(*d*) Industries—Cinchona, and

(*e*) Stationery and Printing.

The reasons for the excess expenditure have been set forth in the memorandum which has been placed in the hands of the honourable members. These reasons were duly considered by the Public Accounts Committee and the recommendations of that committee are that the vote of the Assembly be passed to regularise the voted excess under (*a*) Jails and Convict Settlements, and (*b*) Interest-free Advances, and that the excesses in respect of charged appropriation under the remaining three heads be regularised by His Excellency the Governor. These recommendations will be found in paragraphs 6 and 7 of the Report of the Public Accounts Committee which has just been presented to the Assembly.

Presentation of the Supplementary Estimates for 1942-43.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, I beg to present the supplementary estimate of expenditure for the current year. The total covered by the estimate is Rs. 3,28,27,000 out of which Rs. 4,95,000 is charged and the balance voted. The demand is spread over 20 heads of which two—Interest-free Advances and Loans and Advances—are outside the Revenue Account.

Now, the demand under "Interest-free Advances" amounts to a little over 79 lakhs of rupees. This includes an advance of Rs. 53 lakhs to the Directorate of Civil Supplies for the purchase of food-grains and sugar and the advance of Rs. 15 lakhs to the Civil Transport Officer for the acquisition of motor vehicles for civil defence purposes. Under "Loans and Advances" the demand is Rs. 96½ lakhs. The excess expenditure is due mainly to large scale distribution of agricultural loans in areas devastated by the recent cyclone and flood. The biggest demands under the revised heads are—Rs. 48¾ lakhs under "Famine", Rs. 32 lakhs under "Extraordinary Charges" and Rs. 21½ lakhs under "Police", Rs. 18 lakhs under "Agriculture", Rs. 8½ lakhs under "Miscellaneous" and Rs. 5½ lakhs under "Jails".

The excess under "Famine" is due to the organisation of large scale relief measures for the alleviation of the distress caused by the recent cyclone and flood in the districts of Midnapore and 24-Parganas. Under "Extraordinary Charges" about half of the expenditure is due to the employment of additional wartime police for the protection of vulnerable points. Other important contributory items are the creation of the Directorate of Civil Supplies at a cost of Rs. 4½ lakhs and the organisation of Home Guards at a cost of Rs. 2½ lakhs. Out of the total increase of Rs. 21½ lakhs under "Police" over Rs. 13 lakhs are due to the grants of enhanced dearness allowance and to the Police Emergency Areas Bonus. Of the balance, Rs. 4½ lakhs is due to the expansion of Civic Guard organisation and Rs. 2 lakhs for higher clothing charges on account of the rise in the price of materials. Increase of Rs. 18 lakhs under "Agriculture" is due to the purchase of seeds of various kinds of foodcrops for distribution under the "Grow More Food" campaign. A part of the expenditure will be recouped by the sale of seeds. Under "Miscellaneous" the bulk of the increase of Rs. 8½ lakhs is due to the scheme for the control of vagrancy in Calcutta which had to be taken up directly by Government instead of being left to a local body as was originally contemplated. An additional demand of Rs. 5½ lakhs under "Jails" is due in part to an increase in the number of security prisoners but principally to the rise in the price of foodstuffs, clothing, medicine and other requisites.

I need not trouble honourable members with a racital of the reasons for the demands under the remaining heads which are comparatively small. The reasons for all the demands presented to the House have been set forth in the explanatory memorandum and will be explained more fully by Hon'ble Ministers concerned as each demand is moved.

SPECIAL MOTION.

On Supply and Distribution of Foodstuffs, Coal, Kerosine Oil and Cloth.

Mr. K. SHAHABUDDIN: We would like to know definitely whether another date has been allotted, and if so, what is likely to be the date.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I shall just have a talk with Government, and I shall be in a position to announce it before the adjournment of the House.

Mr. K. SHAHABUDDIN: With due respect I want to point out that if we are certain of a date in the near future and not at a very distant date, then we will accordingly arrange our speakers. I understand that the Hon'ble the Chief Minister suggested 22nd when this question might be taken up. If he is agreeable and the date is definitely fixed, then we will arrange our speakers accordingly, otherwise there will be much difficulty on our part. The original arrangement was that the debate would be finished by today and Mr. Suhrawardy will speak today at the end. Sir, we want to be sure about it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Shahabuddin, it has been finally decided that we will take half a day—at least two hours. It may be on the 21st or on the 22nd at the latest. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, 21st is a Sunday) 22nd is a Monday. Possibly we will get it on Monday. However, I will be able to tell you, say, within one hour.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: May I point out, Sir, that 22nd is a date allotted for initiating the general discussion of the budget, and it would be difficult under the rules to have any part of that date encroached upon without previous sanction of His Excellency the Governor and, Sir, it would be difficult for Honourable Minister or Honourable Chief Minister now on the floor of the House without obtaining His Excellency's sanction to move any alteration in the programme.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I never said 22nd. I said in the near future. However, if 22nd is fixed I will be able to get His Excellency's permission.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: In that event I submit that we will have to make arrangements for the general discussion of the budget being continued after the date now fixed, and even that has to be done with the approval of the Governor, because the budget discussions are all guided by the Governor's Rules and depend upon his individual judgment.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let us proceed now. In one hour's time I shall be in a position to tell you finally.

Khan Bahadur MAULVI JALALUDDIN AHMAD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the motion tabled by the Government in the name of the Chief Whip seems to me to be rather a white resolution like the White Paper.

It is a blank and tentative resolution inviting suggestions on a subject which has not been properly described in the resolution. "The situation in the province relating to supplies" is not the subject or related to the subject which has come under discussion. The motion is taken into consideration, but what is the situation which is to be considered relating to the supply and distribution? Nothing has been said in detail and without this I think the resolution is meaningless. This subject by a similar resolution I understand (although I was absent) was discussed in the last session where I think the Finance Minister, Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee, on behalf of the Government invited all parties in this House for co-operation to solve the problem of the shortage of foodstuffs, to co-ordinate distribution throughout the province, and to have suggestions from those who are in the know of things for the solution of this paramount problem which is striking everybody in the province. The motion is blank and has given no opportunity to the parties—either the Opposition parties or the Congress party—to table proper amendments. They had just put in their amendments under the restrictions imposed by the rules for framing amendments on the original motion. The result has been that there has been an amendment by the Muslim League only offering co-operation of our party, and the Congress amendment seems to be for a Committee consisting of some 16 members from different parties for the solution of this problem. The statement of these facts will at once prove that really no scheme, either co-ordinated or un-co-ordinated, for the supply of essential foodstuffs and other commodities which are required for the daily life of the people of Bengal has yet been devised. I think the last meeting was held in September when Dr. Mookerjee invited suggestions. But up till now nothing has been put in from the Government side as to how they want to solve the problem or what is the purpose they call for the co-operation of the parties. The only thing which I find in the motion is that "this House do take into consideration the situation relating to the supply, etc." The facts are well known to the Government. They are in the know of things in Calcutta; they are in the know of things that are prevailing in the mufassal too. I do not within the short compass of the time want to deal with the theoretical side of the question, nor do I want, as a student of Economics just as Dr. Sanyal, to discuss the theoretical side of co-relation of supply and demand. I will only give my experience of what is happening throughout the province. At the outset I may say that this motion relates to a proposal of very great magnitude. In the words of the Commissioner of the Chittagong Division if this problem is not solved by the democratic Government or by the people by mutual consultation, this problem will be solved by the violence of the masses. This is exactly the view which I share in view of the facts that are happening in the districts, viz., dacoites are rampant, thefts have increased, police cannot control nor have they got time to go after and suppress ordinary crimes in the districts. The acute shortage of food and the rise in the price of essential staple food namely, rice, mustard oil, *dal* and kerosene, are forcing people to take these things forcibly from those who have got these things

The price control is no solution as was said by many, unless you can be sure of your supply. The Government cannot supply the immediate requirements of the people. In Chittagong while I was coming here I was asked by the District Magistrate to press before the Director of Civil Supplies the need for getting rice from outside, mustard oil and kerosene. I think that he himself came to Calcutta and had some talk with the Director of Civil Supplies, and I am told his reply was not very encouraging. The District Magistrate is in a fix as to how to feed the Chittagong town itself, authough the population in the town of Chittagong has decreased to an appreciable extent after the constant bombing and air raids. The District Magistrate in his extreme difficulty has to requisition compulsorily from the mufassal and this has led naturally to the complaint by the poor cultivators who have not got more than what is just sufficient for their families and their labourers. This compulsory requisition has another bad effect. It is depriving the poor people of their stock of paddy and rice and they are forced to sell their stock of paddy and rice, whatever they have got, at a higher rate than the control rate which has been fixed by the local authorities—more than Rs. 12-8 per maund. This is the situation with regard to rice. Chittagong has been very badly affected and it has been put in a very serious difficulty. It is in the frontier of Bengal and we have got to face the enemy. We have got all sorts of troubles and difficulties by reason of our nearness to Burma, where the Government is having some contact with the enemy. This difficulty is further increased owing to the fact that——

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Your time is over.

Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: What is the time allotted to me, Sir?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Ten minutes.

Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: I thought that it was fifteen minutes. Anyway, Sir, I want you to allow me two more minutes.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes.

Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: With regard to mustard oil, the position in Chittagong is very acute. In this connection I should like to say what the Government have done. They have set up one Government Store in Chittagong town which is not sufficient for catering to the needs of the people. The people in hundreds visit one Government Store and they have to wait for hours from early morning and still have to return disappointed in the evening. Therefore my suggestion to the Government is that they should set up more Stores at least one in each Ward of the Municipality, for the distribution of controlled articles. The system of supply of controlled articles through private dealers is very

unsatisfactory and sometimes leads to corruption. So, it is much better to set up Government Stores, as many as possible, for the distribution at least of those foodstuffs which are available in the town.

There is one suggestion which I should like to make in connection with the amendment and it is this. A Committee has been suggested composed of several persons. What I would suggest is that members of this Assembly who know something about the mufassal and rural conditions should be taken on the Committee for the solution of this problem so that things occurring in the mufassal might come to the knowledge of Government.

Maharaja SRISCHANDRA NANDY, of Cossimbazar: Sir, the food policy of the Government came in for a good deal of strong criticism in this House yesterday. As I was listening to the debate, Sir, I was reminded of Aldous Huxley's "Brave New World," where people lived in a science-controlled future and fed on concentrated food pills, instead of the usual food of a crude world which it is today. Our Government was probably expecting some such fantasy of Aldous Huxley to turn up for their rescue, as with their present methods and policy they could hardly cope with the food situation as it obtains at present.

Sir, there cannot be any denying the fact that there is a good deal of public anxiety about the manner in which the Government is handling the food situation. After about a year's working of this policy of control, where do we stand today? Has any dependable estimate been made about the actual requirements of essential commodities in Bengal, and has any effective organisation been set up to ensure regular supply at reasonable prices? I am sorry, Sir, to note that the policy and plans of the Government had been extremely vague and nebulous so far.

Sir, only the other day, we have the statement of the Hon'ble Chief Minister explaining the circumstances in which the Directorate of Civil Supplies has been set up. Our Government have taken more than a year to realise the truth of a very simple principle of economics, namely, that the control of prices could not be made effective without control of supplies. The Hon'ble Chief Minister has referred us to the experiences of England during the last war when it took more than a year to obtain an effective control over supplies. I do not see any point in this reference, Sir, except that our Government have gained nothing by the experiences of other countries, and that they are not sufficiently alert to take advantage of more recent experiences about food control and policy as in Great Britain during the present war.

Sir, only recently our Government has outlined a two-fold programme in which the supply side of the problem seems to have been included. Firstly, there is the Directorate of Civil Supplies, which has been allotted an advance of Rs. 50 lakhs for the purchase of food-stuffs. The Government is now committed to large scale buying operations in the "surplus" rice districts in Southern and Western Bengal, with the objective of

making this surplus rice available to the deficit areas. The purchase is now being made through Government agents, selected probably by the district authorities. As regards the second part of the pragramme, there is the Distributing Trades Tribunal, an organisation set up to ensure equitable distribution of essential commodities over the whole province at fair prices through dealers selected by the Tribunal. Sir, the scheme seems all right on paper. But we have to wait and see how it works out in practice. We are already having a good deal of public criticism about the selection of the Government agents in the districts and also about hardships caused to the trade interests by the restrictions against movement of essential commodities. There are also charges of corruption and nepotism. Three things seem to be essential if this scheme is to succeed. Firstly, the administrative personnel selected for the purpose should be highly trained and efficient. Secondly, control over them must be centralised and placed on one single person responsible to the Legislature. Thirdly, at each important stage of the administration of the policy, steps should be taken to enlist public sympathy and co-operation. I therefore support the view that there should be a Special Minister solely entrusted with the portfolio of Food He should thus be in a position to exercise effective control and supervision over the entire machinery of food control, and be himself answerable to the Legislature for the policy. Secondly, I should think that a non-official Advisory Council should be constituted, representing all interests and points of view, to help the Minister in charge and keep him informed. This is the best way of enlisting public confidence in food policy It may also be found necessary to set up District Advisory Bodies, to help the administration in all matters of detail about the execution of the food policy. At the present moment a distinction is being made between a "surplus" district and a "deficit" district, and not unoften such distinctions are made rather arbitrarily and by referring to antiquated records. Here is a matter where the district advisory bodies, if set up, can be consulted with advantage, as they alone should be in a position to understand the actual position in the district. Then again there may be certain grievances special to the districts and the best method to deal with the same should be through the district advisory body.

Sir, as I have already said, the supreme need of the hour is that the Government measures must inspire public confidence. There must not be any dislocation in the normal economic life by supplanting private traders altogether. While "black markets" must be penalised with a strong hand and hoarding prevented, there is no reason why impediments should be put in the way of all legitimate trade and commerce. Addressing the second meeting of the Central Food Advisory Council the other day, the Hon'ble Mr. N. R. Sarker summed up Government policy as "restoration of public confidence and confidence in normal trading." He stated that all normal instruments of trading will be utilised to the greatest possible extent and will be re-established where necessary. How far have we in Bengal tried to keep up with the outlines of this policy? I think the best

way of implementing this policy is to associate the trading interests with the formulation of food policy in Bengal through a Central Advisory Council.

Sir, I have so far confined myself to the machinery of food control. As regards the wider policy of "Grow More Food, Fodder and Vegetables," I find that this campaign has so far yielded no appreciable results. It has practically failed, for the very simple reason that the *raiyat* was offered no inducement in the shape of a fair and reasonable price for his crops. Then again there had been a lack of co-ordination between districts and the different departments of the Government which unfortunately pulled in different directions. Something must be done to have a more intelligent policy with an eye towards co-ordination and planning.

Then, Sir, as regards the general food position in Bengal, we know that ours had always been a deficit province so far as supply of rice was concerned. This problem was accentuated when Burma and Siam fell into the hands of the Japanese. Up till now, Sir, no tangible steps seem to have been taken to cover up this deficiency. On the other hand, our Government have, with perfect equanimity, allowed exports of rice to be made to Ceylon and other countries. Now, Sir, we are witnessing that the neighbouring provinces of Bihar and Orissa have put embargoes on all movements of essential commodities from within their boundaries. That has put Bengal further on the disadvantage, as we are, on the one hand, losing import from other neighbouring provinces while, on the other, allowing almost unrestricted exports of foodstuffs not only to other provinces but even outside India. This is a dangerous position which must be set right at the earliest opportunity, if necessary with the assistance of the Government of India.

Mr. DAVID HENDRY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think that this debate would have been a very much better debate if it had been opened with a statement from the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Food Department The debate has been left a good deal in the air by reason of the fact that we have no statement to work upon and that probably also accounted for the comparative lack of interest which was shown in this debate yesterday when there was hardly a full quorum left in the House. An opening statement would have focussed the debate as was done on the same subject in the Central Assembly the other day, and Government are certainly open to serious criticism because they did not follow that praiseworthy device here.

In considering this very important question, Sir, three important things must be admitted. One is that Government have had to face an immense problem common to all provinces and one from which all provinces have suffered to a greater or less extent. Secondly, as regards imported commodities such as wheat, *dal* and, to a lesser extent, sugar the Bengal Government has been dependent upon the policies adopted in other provinces and also upon the policy adopted by the Central Government in, so far as their direction and co-ordination of supplies have been concerned. We know that various provinces have followed their own lines. They have placed

embargoes upon exports of their own particular commodities which have made it impossible for this province to obtain its supplies as normally it would. That lack of co-ordination amongst, and the adoption of different policies by, the various provinces are quite beyond the control of this province, and the effort to control the prices of foodstuffs in the face of dwindling and vanishing supplies has been one which has been practically impossible. Thirdly, the Bengal Government (although in this it is not free from blame) has been faced with the proposition of building up a large food department while at the same time coping with an urgent emergency situation.

While therefore we must admit that, for imported commodities, acute local shortage and abnormal prices have been largely due to factors beyond the control of the Bengal Government, so far as the most essential commodity, rice, is concerned, this is a problem which is entirely a domestic matter which we have to settle ourselves. In normal times there is a very small margin between imports of rice into Bengal from Burma and exports of rice to other provinces from Bengal. Last year, Sir, Bengal had a very good rice crop indeed: this year it has not. But with the carry-over from last year's crop the actual shortage of rice in this province must be very small indeed. (DR. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Question!) I do not think that is open to question. Another factor which has been quoted is the loss of stocks of rice in Midnapore due to the cyclone and the loss of the actual growing crop itself. These were undoubtedly very serious local factors but it is very doubtful whether on the whole they have affected the food position or the rice position in Bengal as a whole to a very serious extent.

The other factors which have been quoted as bringing about the present acute shortage of rice in Bengal are export to other provinces and Ceylon and consumption by the military. These again must form an infinitesimal percentage of the total rice supply of Bengal and the conclusion which one is driven to is that there is no real shortage of rice in Bengal such as to justify the fantastic prices we have seen in the last few months. The present situation has been brought about entirely by the anti-social elements which we call hoarders and speculators. (RAI HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: And Government of India buying.) Government of India buying I have already covered in exports to other provinces. The difficulty which has faced the ordinary consumer in obtaining his supplies and the excessive prices which he has had to pay for them have, I maintain, been due almost exclusively to the operation of speculators and hoarders and the chief criticism which we have against Government in this matter is their failure to deal with these anti-social elements. In December last the situation got almost completely out of hand and the Government's only action up to the 16th of that month was to issue a communiqué which, after stating that the situation was not warranted by the stock position or expectations of new crop or export from the province and so on, admitted that the abnormal high prices were due to the operations of hoarders and speculators. But instead of outlining any action which they proposed to take against these anti-social elements they wound up in their famous phrase by warning these people

that they might burn their fingers. Here, Sir, we have the most undesirable anti-social elements turning their attention to the food-grains of the people and creating a *fatka* market with all the disadvantages and grave risk involved, and all that the Government do in this state of acute distress is to warn these people that they might burn their fingers. In Russia and in the Axis-controlled countries these anti-social elements suffer the extreme penalty; in England the penalty is flogging and 14 years' penal servitude. In Bengal it is a kindly warning that they might burn their fingers.

Sir, a week or so after the publication of the first communiqué Government announced its decision to ban export from the Rajshahi Division as the first step in the campaign against speculators. In our opinion that campaign never offered any prospect of success whatsoever. It only tended to encourage the speculators and we see the result today. Government did try, we understand, to secure the co-operation of the trade in securing a free flow of supply and distribution, but surely this does not mean that Government should refrain from dealing and dealing drastically with the black sheep in the trade or submit to the blackmail of speculative elements. Their failure to deal with these harmful individuals is, we think, a shirking of the responsibility of Government itself.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister in his budget speech a few days ago said that the struggle for control of supplies of rice at fair prices was still continuing and that success depended upon the realisation by all concerned from the cultivator to the consumer that Government mean business and is determined to stop profiteering. Well, Sir, I ask you what have the Government done to show that they mean business or to stop profiteering. So far as we have been able to see they have done nothing. Statements of this type also are worse than useless. They only encourage speculators and hoarders to continue and extend their operations.

We hear also from all sides that the agents appointed by Government to purchase supplies in the various surplus districts at fair prices have not been able to do so. To assist those agents Government have banned exports from these surplus districts, but that too has been completely ineffective and Government have been compelled to make purchases themselves through the Food Grains Purchaser. Well, Sir, do Government intend to allow themselves eternally to be frustrated by speculators and people against whom they should take the most drastic action? Sir, the Government of India themselves have already announced that they propose to requisition such hoarded stocks, and, in particular, stocks held by individuals who were not previously in the trade will be requisitioned without any compensation whatsoever. Is it the intention of this Government to follow a similar line of action—that we should very much like to know? And if it is their intention, then we consider that they should publish it widely and as quickly as possible.

A very important part of this problem, Sir, is undoubtedly caused by the fear of shortage among cultivators, consumers and everybody in this province —a fear which is caused by false rumours and lack of public confidence

more than by actual lack of supplies. What have the Government done to dispel that fear? What propaganda have they carried out to restore public confidence and explain the real situation? That we should like to know and we do know that they have done very little or nothing, but we should like to know what their intentions are in this respect.

Sir, our second main criticism of the policy of Government relates to the organisation for controlling food supplies and prices. We appreciate that this is one of the most difficult of problems, one of the problems which has caused great trouble to practically every country in the world today. But surely in this province in creating a large organisation to deal with supplies and distribution it is essential that people who understand the business should be incorporated in the department so concerned. Again, why has there been such delay in setting up the department which they now possess? Many months before Bengal took any action Bombay had already taken steps to set up a Directorate of Supply and to make preliminary arrangements for rationing. Here the question of rationing is only now being considered; whether it will be possible or advisable still remains to be seen, but the point is that the question is only being considered now when things have reached a parlous state. In Bombay—I must say that I hold no brief for Bombay and they are fond of blowing their own trumpet—they have set up food stores which are working effectively and their rationing schemes have already reached an advanced state of completion. The few controlled shops which we have in Calcutta and which have been mentioned from time to time do not constitute a distributing system at all. They were set up for the purpose of providing relief to a few of the poorer classes and the criticism which is directed against these shops is mainly misdirected. The more serious criticism is that Government have done practically nothing so far to set up an effective distributing system at all. So far as the personnel of the Directorate is concerned, I have already indicated that we think that people who understand Supply and Distribution should have been recruited in the department, and in particular, those who are accustomed to the distribution trade which is very complicated and does require expert handling for its effective working.

Another point which we would like to know is whether financial considerations are being allowed to hamper dealing with this food problem. Government has stated on the one hand that it is necessary to set up a large organisation, but on the other hand in the budget we have just heard they provide only Rs. 4½ lakhs for this purpose. (Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal Rs. 53 lakhs.) No. Only 4½ lakhs for the food organisation which I am discussing now. The 53 lakhs are for trading advances. What expansion, for example, is proposed in the staff of inspecting officers? Government say "now that they control supplies they are in a position to enforce prices since offences can be punished by withdrawal of supplies and forfeiture of licences". But how do Government propose to detect offences? The existing price control staff is obviously inadequate and Government has done nothing to secure public co-operation. It should be obvious that on the one hand Government must increase the number of inspecting officers

and pay them adequately while on the other hand they must do something to secure the co-operation of local organisations in exposing price control offences.

In this respect I would mention that in Britain where rationing has been in force for some time, the staff of the Food department is 37,000 for a population of about 45 millions whereas in Bengal the population is over 60 millions.

Evidently under the proposed scheme for controlled distribution the Distributing Trades Tribunal will select wholesale dealers, but retail dealers will be selected by Government officers. What Government officers will do the selection? It is very wrong indeed to entrust such selection to lowly-paid men. This must lead to abuses which are already taking place on a wide scale. From all sides one hears of shops selected to sell this commodity or that commodity which they do not understand and have never sold before.

One further criticism which I would like to make within the time at my disposal is that there appears to be a great lack of co-ordination between the Directorate and the District Administrations. The District Officers are not kept adequately informed of the policy of the Directorate with the result that their actions are sometimes inconsistent with that policy. What steps are Government taking to ensure that the policy is known to District Officers and it is carried out by them?

Sir, before I close I would like to raise one last point and that is in connection with air-raid emergencies. Experience has shown that some organisation is essential for ensuring that shops which are closed during air-raid emergencies are kept open or re-opened for the purpose of providing food for the people. We would like to know finally what preparations Government is making in this respect.

Mr. B. MUKHERJEE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, গভর্ণমেণ্টের প্রস্তাবটা অতি ছোট, ৩ ছত্রের মধ্যে করা হয়েছে। কিন্তু এই ৩ ছত্রের মধ্য দিয়ে এতখানি দায়িত্বহীনতা, অকর্ম্মণ্যতা, বুদ্ধি ও বিবেচনার অভাব এবং সবচেয়ে একান্ত অসহায়তা এমন কোরে যে ফুটিয়ে তোলা যেতে পারে এর পূর্ব্বে আমার ধারণা ছিল না। গভর্ণমেণ্টের প্রস্তাবরচনাকারীর মুন্সীআনার তারিফ ক'র্‌তে হয়, মাত্র ৩ ছত্রে তিনি এতখানি ফুটিয়ে তুলেছেন। Motion হচ্ছে—

"This Assembly do take into consideration" সোজা বাংলায় গভর্ণমেণ্টের নির্দ্দেশমত এসেম্‌বি অবহিত হ'লেন বা বিবেচনাসাধ্য মনে কর্‌লেন। সমস্ত বাংলায় একবছর ধ'রে লক্ষ লক্ষ এবং কোটি কোটি লোক নানা জিনিসের অভাবে নানা দুঃখ যন্ত্রণার ভিতর দিয়ে যখন চরম অবস্থায় প্রায় বিদ্রোহ করবার মত অবস্থায় এসেছে, দুর্ভিক্ষজনিত অবস্থার ভিতর দিয়ে যখন বাংলার ৬ কোটি লোক যাচ্ছে এই রকম অবস্থায় এই এক বৎসর পরে এখন গভর্ণমেণ্ট বিবেচনা কর্‌ছেন বা করার প্রয়োজনীয়তা মনে কর্‌ছেন এই খাদ্য-সমস্যা সম্বন্ধে। অসাধারণ দায়িত্বজ্ঞান, এবং বাংলাদেশের জনসাধারণের সঙ্গে কি গভীর সংযোগ! মাত্র ৬ মাস বা এক বছর লেগেছে অবহিত হ'তে যে বাংলাদেশে একটা খাদ্যসঙ্কট উপস্থিত হয়েছে; এর চেয়ে বেশী দায়িত্বজ্ঞানের পরিচয় আর কোথায়ও পাওয়া যায় না (cries of, 'hear, hear')

তাঁরা যে এটাকে ঐতিহাসিক গবেষণার বিষয় কোরে রেখে দেন নি যে বাংলাদেশে "Grow More Food" propagandaর পরেও যে সব স্থানে food হচ্ছে সেগুলি কবরস্থানে পরিণত হবার পর গভর্ণমেণ্ট অবহিত হয়েছিলেন এটাই ঐতিহাসিক গবেষণার বিষয়। ১৯৪২ সালে বাংলার খাদ্যসঙ্কট কেন হয়েছিল তাহা স্থির না কোরে এবং তার প্রতীকার না কোরে তাঁরা যে ১৯৪৩ সালের ফেব্রুয়ারী মাসে বিবেচনা কর্‌বার মত সময় পেয়েছেন এটাতেই বোঝা যায় যে কতখানি তাঁদের দায়িত্বজ্ঞান। বোধ হয় আজকার ও কালকার এই সংবাদে বাংলার ঘরে ঘরে আনন্দের রোল উপস্থিত হয়েছে যে এসেম্‌ব্লি বাংলাদেশের খাদ্যসঙ্কট সম্বন্ধে যে সমস্যা তার সম্বন্ধে অবহিত হয়েছেন। এর পরেও যদি বাংলার কোটি গৃহে আনন্দের রোল না উঠে তবে দুর্ভাগ্য ঐ বাংলার কোটি গৃহের, মন্ত্রিদলের নয়, গভর্ণমেণ্টেরও নয়; বাস্তবিক অপরাধী তারা। এঁরা ত এখন এক বৎসর পরে এ সম্বন্ধে বিবেচনা ক'রতে লেগে গেছেন। এই হ'ল গিয়ে এই প্রস্তাবের ভিতর দায়িত্বজ্ঞানের পরিচয়।

দ্বিতীয়তঃ, বুদ্ধি, বিবেচনা ও কর্ম্মণ্যতা—৩ ছত্রের ভিতর কোথাও বলা হয় নি যে গত বৎসর কোন খাদ্যসঙ্কট ছিল, বঙ্গদেশে কোন রকম দুঃখকষ্ট গিয়েছে। গভর্ণমেণ্টের সে সম্বন্ধে কোন নীতি ছিল বা ছিল না এবং সেই নীতি কতখানি কার্য্যকরী হয়েছে বা হ'তে পারে নি, বা বর্ত্তমানে গভর্ণমেণ্টের নীতি তাঁদের আগেকার নীতি যদি অকার্য্যকরী হয়ে থাকে—তা হ'লে এক বৎসরের অভিজ্ঞতা থেকে নূতন কোন নীতি তাঁরা প্রণয়ন কোরেছেন বা সেই নীতি অনুসারে তাঁরা চল্‌বেন এরকম কোথাও কিছু উল্লেখ নাই। কাজেই এর ভিতর দিয়ে গভর্ণমেণ্টের অসীম বুদ্ধি, বিবেচনা বা কর্ম্মণ্যতার পরিচয় ফুটে উঠেছে।

ডেপুটী স্পীকার, স্যার! আমার ধারণা যে বাংলার মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীর বা বাংলা গভর্ণমেণ্টের এই খাদ্য সম্বন্ধে কোন নীতি নাই। কেন্দ্রীয় গভর্ণমেণ্টের যে নীতি আছে খাদ্য সম্বন্ধে সেই নীতি বাংলাদেশের মন্ত্রিদল চান বা না চান, বুঝুন বা না বুঝুন, সেই নীতিই পরিচালিত করেন এবং সে সম্বন্ধে তাঁরা যে একান্ত অসহায় তার প্রমাণ হচ্ছে এই প্রস্তাবের মধ্যে কোন সূচনা না থাকা। তাঁদের নীতির অভাবের আর একটা প্রকৃষ্ট প্রমাণ যাঁর এ বিষয়ে সবচেয়ে অবহিত হওয়া উচিত আজকে সেই মন্ত্রী মহাশয়কে এখানে অনুপস্থিত দেখ্‌ছি। অবশ্য আমার মতে তিনি থাক্‌লেও কিছু আসে যায় না। কেন্দ্রীয় গভর্ণমেণ্টের নীতি তাঁরা বুঝুন বা না বুঝুন সেই নীতিই এখানে পরিচালিত করা হয়। সেই নীতিটা কি সে সম্বন্ধে গত এক বৎসরে যে ফল লাভ করা গেছে অন্ততঃ তা থেকে সেটা বোঝা যায়; তা ছাড়া আর কোন উপায় নাই। কেন্দ্রীয় গভর্ণমেণ্ট যে কোন নীতি অনুসরণ করুন না কেন তাঁদের কোন দায়িত্ব না থাকার দরুণ তাঁরা কোন দিন সাধারণের বিবেচনার জন্য ছেড়ে দেন নি। সুতরাং ফল থেকেই উদ্ভাবন ক'র্‌তে হয় কি নীতি তাঁরা অনুসরণ কর্‌ছেন।

আজ পর্য্যন্ত গভর্ণমেণ্টের নীতি হচ্চে কোন প্রকার rationing না করা। অথচ সম্পূর্ণ অনিয়ন্ত্রিতভাবে যদি কর্ম্মচারীদের উপর সমস্ত জিনিসটা ছেড়ে দেওয়া হয়, এই বুর্জোয়া ভাগ্যবিধাতার demand and supply ভাগ্যবিধাতার হাতে ছেড়ে দেওয়া হয়, তাহ'লে দেশের এতখানি দুরবস্থা হয় না; যদি সম্পূর্ণ অবাধ বাণিজ্যের উপর সমস্ত ব্যবস্থা ছেড়ে দেওয়া হয়, demand and supplyএর উপর যদি কোন control না থাকে, কোন রকম rationing যদিও না থাকে তাহ'লেও অন্ততঃ এ বিষয়ে খানিকটা সুরাহা হয়।

কিন্তু তাঁদের পলিসি হচ্চে খানিকটা কণ্ট্রোল করবার চেষ্টা করা এবং সেই নীতির পিছন থেকে দেখা যায় যে তাঁদের নীতি হচ্চে price control করা বা মূল্য নিয়ন্ত্রণ করা। কি হিসাবে? মূল্য যাতে জনসাধারণের বাঁচবার উপযোগী হয় ঠিক তার বিপরীত।

কেন্দ্রীয় গভর্ণমেণ্টের নয়া নীতি হচ্চে মূল্য ধাপে ধাপে বাড়িয়ে তোলা যাতে কোরে মানুষ সম্পূর্ণ অসমর্থ হয় কিন্‌তে। এই হচ্চে definite policy এবং এ সম্বন্ধে স্যার রামস্বামী মুদালিয়র ও Sir Jeremy Raisman পরিষ্কার কেন্দ্রীয় গভর্ণমেণ্টে বোলে দিয়েছেন যে আজকে দেশে যে কেন্‌বার ক্ষমতা হয়েছে সেই কেন্‌বার ক্ষমতার বিরুদ্ধে যেমন কোরে হোক একটা বাঁধ দিয়ে দিতে হবে, অর্থাৎ এমন ভাবে একটা dam create কর্‌তে হবে যাতে কোরে মানুষের কেনবার ক্ষমতা কমে যায়, অর্থাৎ ধাপে ধাপে যাতে দাম বেড়ে ওঠে। সোজাসুজি rationing কর্‌লে পর, দেশে এতখানি জিনিস আছে, এতগুলি লোক আছে, প্রত্যেক লোককে তার এতখানি অংশ দিলে পর যে rationing হয়, সে rationing তাঁরা ক'রবেন না। সে বিষয়ে প্রথমে বলেন যে তাঁরা অসমর্থ; কারণ ভারতবর্ষ বিরাট দেশ, ইত্যাদি। কিন্তু আসলে তাঁদের ভিতরকার নীতি রয়েছে যে তাঁরা rationing ক'রতে চান না। ক'র্‌লে পর তাঁদের যে সমস্ত উদ্দেশ্য—শোচনীয়, মর্ম্মন্তুদ, criminal উদ্দেশ্য আছে তা সাধিত হ'তে পারে না। এই জন্য rationing ক'রতে চান না। অথচ সঙ্গে সঙ্গে জানেন যে জিনিসের অভাব আছে। কি কোরে সেটা মিটান যায়। অতএব সঙ্গে সঙ্গে দাম বাড়িয়ে যাচেচন। দাম বাড়িয়ে দেবার ফলে যাঁরা দুঃস্থ তাঁরা কিন্‌তে পারবেন না। যদি গভর্ণমেণ্টের শুধু এক বৎসরের এই price control বা দাম নিয়ন্ত্রণ কর্‌বার নীতি অনুধাবন করা যায় তাহ'লে দেখা যায় যে price control এবং চোরা বাজার পাশাপাশি চলেছে, একে অপরকে সাহায্য ক'র্‌ছে (laughter) একমাসে যখন price control করা হ'ল সঙ্গে সঙ্গে দেখা গেল চোরা বাজারে মাল আট্‌কে গেছে, বাজারে জিনিস পাওয়া যায় না দাম পড়ে গেলে। গভর্ণমেণ্ট তখন অসহায় হয়ে আর এক ধাপ দাম বাড়িয়ে দিলেন। এইভাবে ১৯৪২ সালের এপ্রিল মাস থেকে এক বৎসরের যদি মাসের পর মাস statistics দেখা যায় তাহ'লে সুস্পষ্টভাবে ধরা পড়ে যাবে যে গভর্ণমেণ্ট একটা definite policy pursue ক'র্‌চেন যাতে price ধাপে ধাপে বেড়ে যায়; এবং তাঁরা কোন দিন চোরা বাজারকে আট্‌কাবার চেষ্টা করেন নি; বরং নিজেরা চোরা বাজার organise কোরেছেন (cries of "shame, shame"). ৬৲ বা ৭৲ টাকার চাউল কিনে যে ১২৲ বা ১৩৲ টাকায় বিক্রী করা হয় তাকেই বলা হয় চোরা বাজার এবং সে বিষয়ে গভর্ণমেণ্ট নিজে চোরা বাজার চালাবার সম্পূর্ণভাবে ব্যবস্থা কোরেছেন। (A voice: গভর্ণমেণ্ট তাহ'লে চোর!) এই হ'ল চোরা বাজার এবং তাঁদের নীতি। এ দুটো পাশাপাশি চলেছে। এর জন্য আজ পর্য্যন্ত কত থিওরি এ সম্বন্ধে দেখা গেল। প্রত্যেকটা অবস্থার মধ্যে এক একটা theory এসে হাজির হয়। গত বৎসরের গোড়ায় গোড়ায় শুনতাম ভারতবর্ষে গম চাউল কোন জিনিসের অভাব নাই। গভর্ণমেণ্টের প্রত্যেকটী কর্ম্মচারীর মুখ থেকে এই theory শুনতে পেতাম যে rationingএর প্রয়োজন নাই, এত supply রয়েছে, আর এ জিনিসের ঔষধ rationing ও নয়। তখন প্রত্যেক গভর্ণমেণ্ট কর্ম্মচারীর মুখে শোনা যেত wheatএর অভাব নেই, riceএর অভাব নাই, কোন জিনিসের অভাব নাই। তখন প্রয়োজন ছিল এদেশে rationing না করা এবং সঙ্গে সঙ্গে বাহিরে export করা। ইরাণ এবং ইরাকে বিদ্রোহ প্রশমন করা, সিলোনে পাঠান বেশী দরকার; ভারতবর্ষের ক্ষুধা প্রশমন করার দরকার ছিল না। সে সময়কার নীতি হ'ল, theory হ'ল exportএর প্রয়োজন। তার পরে যখন গত ৬ মাসের

ভিতর ভারতবর্ষের নিজের আভ্যন্তরীণ অবস্থা অত্যন্ত সঙ্গীন হয়ে উঠল, প্রত্যেকটী গ্রামে বিদ্রোহের অবস্থা দেখা গেল, যখন তাঁরা দেখলেন যে rationing না কোরলে চলে না তখন theory হ'ল কোন কোন স্থানে খাদ্যের কিছু ঘাটতি হয়েছে, এবং ২।১ জায়গায় গভর্ণমেণ্ট [illegible] মুখ থেকে শুনতে পাওয়া গেল ঘাটতি বেশী নয়, 5% বা এই রকম; অর্থাৎ ঘাটতির কথা শুনে পাছে আজ জনসাধারণ চেপে ধরে যে rationing করা হউক বা গভর্ণমেণ্ট কিছু জিনিস কিনে একটা Free Marketএ throw করুন। Pinnel সাহেব এখানে খাদ্য-নিয়ন্ত্রণের কর্ত্তা। তাঁর মাথায় এইটা এসেছে যে একটা বাল্‌তি কোরে খাদ্য রেখে দেওয়া হউক। মাঝে মাঝে Free Marketএ বাল্‌তি ছেড়ে দিলে সমস্ত জিনিস প্রশমিত হয়। আমেরিকাবিক্ষুব্ধ সমুদ্রে তেলের ছিটা দেবার মত ব্যবস্থা তিনি কোরেছেন। কিন্তু rationing না করবার কোন সার্থকতা দেখতে পাওয়া যায় না, বিশেষতঃ কতকগুলি জিনিস সম্বন্ধে। কেননা এমন কতকগুলি জিনিস আছে যে জিনিস এই বাংলাদেশে তৈয়ার হয় না, বাংলার বাহির থেকে আসে, যার supply সম্পূর্ণ বাহিরের উপর নির্ভর করে; যেমন কেরোসিন; কেরোসিন আগে যা সরবরাহ হ'ত এখন তার অর্দ্ধেক সরবরাহ হয়। কেরোসিনের বিনা rationing এ কি কোরে বাংলাদেশ চল্‌তে পারে? যাঁরা কেরোসিনের মালিক তাঁরা রাজী ছিলেন সম্পূর্ণ দায়িত্ব নিতে যে বাংলার সর্ব্বত্র এজেণ্টের মারফৎ কেরোসিন পৌঁছে দেবেন। কিন্তু আজ পর্য্যন্ত গভর্ণমেণ্টের নিকট থেকে সে কথার উত্তর পর্য্যন্ত তাঁরা পান নি। আজ পর্য্যন্ত সে বিষয়ের কোন মীমাংসা হয় নি। তাঁরা অপটুহস্তে এমনই ভাবে কাজ কোরেছেন যে কেরোসিনের আজ এ রকম অবস্থা যে সহরগুলিতে ত কষ্ট কোরে black out ক'র্‌তে হয়েছে কিন্তু বাংলার গ্রামগুলিতে সম্পূর্ণ black out হয়ে গেছে কেরোসিনের অভাবে। এই কেরোসিন সম্বন্ধে অত্যন্ত পরিষ্কারভাবে জানাতে চাচ্ছি যে অন্ততঃ যদি অর্দ্ধেক কোরে rationing করা হয় অর্থাৎ normally যে লোক যেটুকু কেরোসিন ব্যবহার ক'র্‌ত আজ যদি তার অর্দ্ধেক প্রত্যেকে পান তাহ'লে পর এটার সুব্যবস্থা হ'তে পারে। তা যদি না হয়, যদি সেখানে supply হয় অর্দ্ধেক অথচ মার্কেট থাকে ফ্রী তাহ'লে নিশ্চয়ই দাম চারগুণ পাঁচগুণ চড়িয়ে দিয়ে ধনস্থ, দরিদ্র লোকদের কেরোসিনের বাজার থেকে হটিয়ে দিয়ে নিজেদের পেটোয়া সমস্ত লোকের ঘরে কেরোসিন পৌঁছে দেওয়া হবে, অন্য লোকের ঘরে না দিয়ে। তাতে new privileged class তৈয়ার হবে।

অন্যান্য জিনিসের কথা ছেড়ে দিই। কয়লার সম্বন্ধে বলি যে কয়লা ত South Africa থেকে আসে না, New Castle থেকেও আসে না; কয়লা রাণীগঞ্জের খনি থেকে উঠে বাংলাদেশের চারিদিকে যায়। সেই কয়লার দর ৫৲ মণ কি ক'রে ঘট্‌তে পারে? গভর্ণমেণ্ট পূর্ব্বে যে ফরেষ্ট নীতি চালিয়ে গেছেন তার ফলে আজকে বাংলাদেশের বহু গ্রামে জ্বালানী কাঠ পাওয়া যায় না, এবং তার পরেও যেটুকু কোন কোন জায়গায় পাওয়া যেত, সমুদ্রের উপকূলবর্ত্তী জায়গা থেকে সমস্ত নৌকা সরিয়ে নেবার ফলে খুলনা প্রভৃতি জায়গায় যেখানে আজ পর্য্যন্ত জ্বালানী কাঠ দিয়ে চালান হ'ত, আজ সেখানে জ্বালানী কাঠ পাওয়া অসম্ভব। সর্ব্বত্র কয়লা ছাড়া আজ চল্‌তে পারে না। অথচ এই কয়লার উৎপত্তি কি ক'মে গেছে? এটাও কি nature's clemencyর উপর নির্ভর করে? কয়লার উৎপাদন সম্পূর্ণ নির্ভর করে আমাদের উপর; আমরা বাড়াতে চাইলে বাড়্‌তে পারে কিন্তু সেই কয়লা আজ সর্ব্বত্র পৌঁছায় না কেন? এ বিষয়ের দায়িত্ব সম্পূর্ণ গভর্ণমেণ্টের। আজ এখানে তাঁরা বল্‌বেন যে transport আমাদের হাতে নাই। পরিষ্কার দেখতে পাওয়া যায় যে Transport, Civil Supply প্রভৃতির

সমস্ত নীতি কেন্দ্রীয় গভর্ণমেণ্ট চালান; কিন্তু যখনই কোন একটা সমস্যার সাম্‌না-সাম্‌নি এসে দাঁড়ান তখনই আসে প্রাদেশিক স্বায়ত্তশাসনের কথা, Province দের তখন ভয়ঙ্কর সম্মান ও সম্ভ্রম বেড়ে ওঠে। যদি আজ বাংলাকে বলা হয় উড়িষ্যা থেকে চাউল আমদানী করা হউক, C. P. থেকে বা আসাম থেকে চাউল আমদানী করা হউক তখনই কেন্দ্রীয় গভর্ণমেণ্ট অসহায়। তখন বলা হয় উড়িষ্যা গভর্ণমেণ্ট স্বতন্ত্র, C. P. এবং আসাম গভর্ণমেণ্ট স্বতন্ত্র; এদের উপর আমাদের কোন হাত নাই। কিন্তু তাঁদের যখন প্রয়োজন হয় তখন তাঁদের চাউল কেনা, গম কেনা, কোন কিছু আট্‌কে যায় না। তাঁদের যখনই প্রয়োজন হয় তখনই transportএর অভাব হয় না। আজকে বাংলার মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীর transportএর উপর অধিকার নাই কিন্তু বাংলা-দেশের উপর তাঁদের অধিকার আছে। সীতারামপুরের এধারে গাড়ী এলে তা আট্‌কে দেবার অধিকার বাংলা গভর্ণমেণ্টের আছে। যদি তাঁদের সঙ্গে কেন্দ্রীয় গভর্ণমেণ্টের এরকম ঝগড়া উপস্থিত হয় যে তাঁরা wagon দেবেন না তাহ'লে এই বাংলা গভর্ণমেণ্ট এই বাংলার ভিতর দিয়ে তাঁদের রেল সম্বন্ধে বহু step নিতে পারেন। কিন্তু কেন্দ্রীয় গভর্ণমেণ্টের সঙ্গে বাংলা গভর্ণমেণ্টের এই অবস্থা হওয়ার সম্ভাবনা নাই। তাঁদের ভিতর সে রকম একটা তেজস্বিতার অভাব বোলে কেন্দ্রীয় গভর্ণমেণ্টের যে নীতি তা সরাসরি এখানে চলে যায়।

এতদিন পরে গভর্ণমেণ্ট চিনি সম্বন্ধে regional rationing কোরেছেন; একটা tribunal কোরেছেন, তাঁদের মার্ফতে চিনি দেওয়া হবে। অথচ আজও এখানে চিনির যে দর তাই কি ন্যায্য দর হওয়া উচিত? যে দর আখের উৎপাদক বিহারের ও উত্তর পশ্চিম প্রদেশের কৃষককে দিতে হয় তার উপরে যে rate পড়ে সেই অনুসারে চিনির বাজার দর হওয়া উচিত। তাহ'লে কলিকাতায় ।৶০-।৷০ আনা দর হওয়ার কি কোন প্রয়োজন আছে? অবশ্য চিনির অবস্থা আগের চেয়ে খানিকটা সহজ হয়েছে, অর্থাৎ এতদিন পরে rationing হওয়ায় খানিকটা বেশী দাম হ'লেও পাওয়া যাচ্ছে। যাই হোক এ সম্বন্ধে আমার একমাত্র কথা হচ্চে যে এই সমস্ত জিনিসের প্রতীকার কিছুতেই সম্ভব নয় এই সমস্ত ব্যক্তিদের হাত থেকে। অতএব আমাদের দাবী হচ্চে যে জনসাধারণের এই খাদ্যের উপর থেকে এঁদের লোলুপ কুৎসিত হাত উঠিয়ে নিন। এইযে আপনারা বসে আছেন মন্ত্রীদের পিছনে—আমার ধারণা মন্ত্রীদের নিজস্ব কোন নীতি নাই, যা কিছু বলাচেচন তাই তাঁরা বল্‌ছেন; এমনই তাঁদের অসহায় অবস্থা ফুটে পড়েছে। আমরা চাই সেই কলুষিত হাত খাদ্য থেকে তুলে নেওয়া হউক। একমাত্র popular Government দ্বারা এই খাদ্য সমস্যার মীমাংসা হ'তে পারে। যদি সমস্ত দল মিলিত হয়, সমস্ত পার্টি সংঘবদ্ধ হয়ে নিজেদের হাতে খাদ্যের ব্যবস্থা কোরে নেয় তবে সেই জাতীয় গভর্ণমেণ্টের ভিতর দিয়েই একমাত্র সুষ্ঠু সমাধান হ'তে পারে। এ ছাড়া আর কোন উপায় নাই। কিন্তু তার পূর্ব্বে ও আজকে প্রয়োজন হয়েছে সমস্ত জনসাধারণের সংঘবদ্ধ হয়ে তাদের people's Committeeর হাতের ভিতর সমস্ত জিনিসটা নেওয়া। অযোগ্য, অকর্ম্মণ্য, লোলুপ এবং যাদের নিজস্ব কোন স্বার্থ আছে সেই রকম আমলাদের কলুষিত হাত থেকে জনসাধারণকে এই অধিকার কেড়ে নিতে হবে।

এই বোলে আমি ডাক্তার সান্যালের সংশোধন প্রস্তাব সমর্থন করচি।

Dr. GOBINDA CHANDRA BHOWMIK: আজকে আমাদের সামনে যে সমস্যা উপস্থিত হয়েছে ইহা অত্যন্ত গুরুতর সমস্যা। যেদিন থেকে জাপান যুদ্ধ আরম্ভ করে সেদিন থেকে ধান চাউলের দাম বাড়তে আরম্ভ করে। ১৯৪১ সালের জানুয়ারী মাসে চালের দাম ছিল ৭।৮৲ টাকা মণ। আর ১৯৪২ সালের জানুয়ারী মাসে হল

১৫৲ টাকা আর আজ কলিকাতায় চালের মণ ১৭৲ টাকা ইহার কারণ কি। ইহার যে একটা বিশিষ্ট কারণ আছে তা প্রত্যেকেরই বিবেচনা করা উচিত। আজ বাংলাদেশ ধানের সম্বন্ধে self-sufficient নয়। বাংলাদেশে ১৯২১ সালে ২০ মিলিয়ন একর ধানের চাষ হয়। ১৯৩৮ সালে বাংলাদেশে ২২ মিলিয়ন একর জমিতে ধানের চাষ হয়েছিল। গড়ে চাল হয়েছিল ৮৬ লক্ষ টন। বাংলার দরকার হল ১১০ লক্ষ টন। প্রতি বৎসর ২৪ লক্ষ টন কম পড়ে। পূর্ব্বে আসাম বার্মা হইতে ধান চাউল আসিত। বার্মা চলিয়া যাওয়ার ফলে বাংলাদেশের অবস্থা এইরূপ হইয়াছে। বার্মা চলিয়া যাওয়ায় বাংলাদেশের আজ হৃৎকম্প উপস্থিত। আজকে মধ্যবিত্ত সম্প্রদায়ের অবস্থা, দরিদ্র শ্রমিক কৃষকদের অবস্থা অত্যন্ত গুরুতর এবং শোচনীয়। যে অবস্থায় তাহারা উপস্থিত হইয়াছে তাহাতে তাহাদের অনশনে কাল কাটাইতে হইবে। আমি মফঃস্বল হইতে আসিয়াছি—সেখানকার অবস্থা অনুভব করিয়াছি। সেখানে ১৯৪২-৪৩ সালে চাষীর অবস্থা অত্যন্ত খারাপ। আমি নিজে চাষী—আমার কিছু জমি-জমা আছে। মেদিনীপুর ভীষণ ঝড় এবং বন্যায় ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত হইয়াছে এবং ২৪-পরগণার কিয়দংশও ভীষণভাবে ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত হইয়াছে। যে অংশ ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত হয় নাই সেখানে আমার কিছু জমি আছে। সেখানে বিঘাপ্রতি গড়ে একবার মাত্র ২।২৷৷০ মণ ধান পাইয়াছি। এই বৎসর ২৪-পরগণায় বিশেষ Diamond Harbour এবং Basirhat subdivision এর অবস্থাও অত্যন্ত খারাপ। ধান চাউল সম্বন্ধে বাংলার কয়েকটি district deficient কয়েকটি district self-sufficient এবং বাকিগুলি surplus. Surplus district —Chittagong, Dinajpur, Birbhum, Bankura, Midnapur. Self-sufficient :—Rangpur, Bogra, 24-Parganas. Deficient :—Noakhali, Tippera, Dacca, Jalpaiguri, Rajshahi, Nadia, Khulna, Howrah, Hooghly, Mymensingh.

আজ বাংলাদেশের ৬ কোটি লোকের খাদ্য সমস্যার কি করিয়া সমাধান হইতে পারে ইহাই চিন্তার বিষয়। গভর্ণমেণ্ট যখন ধান কিনিতে আরম্ভ করেন তখন হইতেই আস্তে আস্তে অনেক ধান সরান হইয়াছে। তারপর Shaw Wallace কোম্পানিও অনেক ধান চাউল Iraq এবং Iranএ চালান দিয়াছে। এ বৎসর বাংলাদেশের ২৪-পরগণায় আশানুরূপ চাউল জন্মায় নাই, ফলে দুরবস্থার সৃষ্টি হইয়াছে। Midnaporeএ গত বৎসর মে মাসে যখন denial policy প্রবর্ত্তিত হয় তখন District Magistrate notice দেন যে উপকূল অঞ্চলের সমস্ত surplus ধান চাউল বাণিজ্যিকে পৌঁছাইয়া দিতে হইবে যাহাতে জাপানীরা আসিলে মেদিনীপুরের ধান চাউল তাহাদের হাতে না পড়ে। গভর্ণমেণ্ট এই ধান চাউল কিনিয়া লইবেন এবং উচিত মূল্য দিবেন। এই হুকুম যখন হইল তখন যে যেমন পারিল ধান চাউল বেচিয়া ফেলিল।

Midnapore districtএর সদর ঝাড়গ্রাম, ঘাঁটাল subdivision হইতে রেলে করিয়া ধান চাউল বাহিরে যায়। আর Contai, Tamluk হইতে নৌকায় করিয়া ধান চাউল বাহিরে যায়। Denial policy প্রবর্ত্তিত হইবার পরে বহু ধান চাউল মেদিনীপুর হইতে বাহিরে চলিয়া যায় তারপর আসিল ঝড় এবং বন্যা। এই বন্যায় কাঁথি, তমলুক অঞ্চলের প্রায় ১,২০০ square mile স্থান ভাসাইয়া লইয়া গেল। মেদিনীপুরে অন্যান্য অংশের অবস্থাও বিশেষ আশাপ্রদ নহে। ঝাড়গ্রাম, সদর, দাঁতন এবং অন্যান্য মহকুমায়ও ফসল আশানুরূপ হয় নাই। এই ঝড়ের পরে আবার Supply officer আসিলেন। মেদিনীপুরবাসীদের তখন দুঃখ-দুর্দ্দশার শেষ ছিল না, লোকে খাইতে পাইতেছিল না তখনও বেলদা station হইতে ৫০ হাজার মণ ধান বাহিরে চলিয়া গেল। তমলুক subdivision এর মহিষাদল থানার লোকেরা চাউলের অভাবে কুড়া খাইতেছে। গভর্ণমেণ্টের পক্ষ হইতে এবং non-official দের পক্ষ হইতে

কিছুদিন relief দেওয়া হইতেছিল। তাহাও এখন প্রায় বন্ধ হইয়া গিয়াছে। তমলুকের ৭৩টি ইউনিয়নের মধ্যে ৩৪টি non-official দের হাতে ছিল আর বাকি ৩৯টি Government এর হাতে ছিল। কাঁথির দুর্ভাগ্য ৬০টি ইউনিয়ন Government এর হাতে ছিল আর বাকি ২২টি non-official দের হাতে ছিল।

বিগত ভীষণ ঝড়ে এবং বন্যায় মেদিনীপুরবাসী প্রায় ১২ লক্ষ লোকের অবস্থা হীন হইয়া গিয়াছে। সমস্ত শস্যাদি ভাসাইয়া নিয়া গিয়াছে। গভর্ণমেণ্ট যা relief দিচ্ছেন তা সম্যক নয় বা অনেক ক্ষেত্রে বাইরের থেকেও relief আসতে দিচ্ছেন না। একটা familyতে যেখানে ৮জন লোক সেখানে Government ২ জন লোকের dole দিয়েছিলেন তাও বন্ধ করা হয়েছে। আজ গরীব কৃষকদের সামর্থ্য নেই বাজারে গিয়ে ১৫৲ টাকা মণের চাউল কিনিবার। এই অবস্থায় আবার দেখা যাচ্ছে যে বহুলোক কলেরায় মারা যাইতেছে। সুতাহাটা থানার দেড় হাজার এবং নন্দী গ্রাম থানার প্রায় এক হাজার লোক কলেরায় মারা গিয়াছে। কলেরার প্রধান কারণ হচ্ছে কুড়ো, শাকপাতা খাওয়া। তাহারা যাহা যাহা পাইতেছে তাহাই খাইতেছে। এই অবস্থায় বাহির হইতে ধান চাউলের আমদানী দরকার। ২৪-পরগণার চাষীদের হুকুম দেওয়া হয়েছে তারা ধান চাউল বাহিরে লইয়া যাইতে পারিবে না। মেদিনীপুর-বাসী উড়িষ্যা হইতে ধান চাউল আনিতে পারিবে না। তাছাড়া গভর্ণমেণ্ট যা সাহায্য করিকরিয়াছেন তাহাতে সারা বছর চলিতে পারে না।

আজ এই অবস্থায় কি করা যাইতে পারে। আজ গভর্ণমেণ্টের সর্ব্বপ্রধান কর্ত্তব্য হইল যথেষ্ট পরিমাণে supply shop এবং co-operative stores খুলিবার ব্যবস্থা করা। তাহা হইলে অন্ততঃ যাহাদের কিনিবার সামর্থ্য আছে তাহারা কিনিয়া খাইতে পারে। আজ এই অবস্থা হইয়াছে যাহার পয়সা আছে এবং যাহার পয়সা নাই, উভয়ের অবস্থাই সমান। আজ যে সমস্যার আমরা সম্মুখীন হইয়াছি তাহা শুধু মেদিনীপুরের সমস্যা নয় সমস্ত বাংলাদেশের সমস্যা। আজকে back door দিয়ে ধান কেনা হচ্ছে অথচ বলা হচ্ছে ধান নেই। যদি non-official committeeকরে enquiry করা হয় তাহ'লে দেখা যাবে যে ইতিমধ্যে দেশে অনাটন আরম্ভ হয়েছে। আমি বলছি মে, জুন, জুলাই মাসের জন্য প্রস্তুত থাকুন। যদি এই অবস্থার প্রতিকার না হয় তবে বিদ্রোহ দেখা দিবে এবং শুধু বাংলাদেশ নয় সমস্ত ভারত-বর্ষের দুরবস্থা হবে।

(At this stage the House was adjourned for ten minntes.)

(After adjournment.)

Election of Speaker.

Mr. K. SHAHABUDDIN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have just been officially informed by the Chief Whip of the Government in your presence that the date of the election of the Speaker has been changed from the 22nd to the 1st March. I want to record a strong protest on behalf of the Opposition that this is a breach of the privilege of this House and a gross act of corruption to change the date.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Shahabuddin, all that I can tell you is that I have no official information.

Mr. K. SHAHABUDDIN: What I am telling you—and you are my witness—is that the Government Chief Whip informed me officially that the date of the election of the Speaker has been changed from the 22nd to 1st March. I want to record my protest that without reference to the Opposition after notifying the date of the election to change it to suit the convenience of Government and the Government nominee is outrageous, and I say it is an act of corruption.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have no official information.

Special Motion.

Mr. C. GRIFFITHS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is no doubt that the problem relating to the supplies of food-stuffs, such as rice, *atta*, sugar, etc., and other necessities of life, namely, coal, kerosene oil and cloth, is a very difficult and complicated one for the simple reason that there is an actual shortage of these goods brought about by the war and the loss of Burma.

Now, let us answer a straightforward question—what is the natural result when there is a shortage? Prices must go up. What are we trying to do? Forcibly—crudely and unintelligently—keep down prices. We are attempting to do the impossible. If we put obstacles in the way and stop the natural flow of these articles into the usual market, we must be prepared for an explosion By half-measures we only aggravate the position and go from bad to worse. We will ultimately bring about looting and rioting and find that no merchant will waste his time dealing in goods that will not pay him. Therefore, the whole situation which is of such vital importance must be handled with great care. It is not a communal matter. It is a matter that concerns the nation. It is useless casting aspersions on the Government formed by the majority community. They have done their best under difficult circumstances. They have acted as the fairy god-mother to the poor by opening controlled shops in Calcutta. But this has brought no relief to the middle classes nor solved the problem.

I might relate a very interesting case of a lad who obtained a seer of sugar for six annas and when he found that there was no more sugar available and others were waiting, he sold his seer immediately for eight annas which was cheaper than what sugar was selling at the uncontrolled shops. Now, was he or was he not entitled to do what he wanted with his quota?

In a matter like this we want the co-operation of every community and party as it is a national crisis and the best way to tackle the problem is by an Advisory Committee by the best brains of the nation, and not by any single community. Let us, therefore, unite and share the responsibility by forming a National Government. Let us get the best men to serve us, irrespective of caste, colour or creed. We cannot afford to have incompetent men at the head of our affairs (Hear! Hear!) because they belong to any particular community and then suggest that drastic measures should be taken as they take in Germany and Russia. But the point is, will

they ever be able to catch the culprits as they are sure to evade the law! (Hear! hear!). We must overcome the difficulty by legitimate and clever means. We must have a Government that people will trust. Therefore why not have a united Government—a Government of the people—a National Government, a Government consisting of Hindus, Muslims and the British people?

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH SEN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is very difficult to discuss the problem of food at this fag end of the day when the House is about to be adjourned. There is hardly any doubt that the food problem has become most acute. The position appears to be serious if examined from the point of view of the cost of living index of the working class people which has moved from 100 (the pre-war base) to 218 on the 31st December, 1942. The average price of varieties of rice has increased by nearly 300 per cent. and that of *atta* by more than 200 per cent. (DR. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: The price of *atta* has increased by 600 per cent.) I stand corrected. The price of coal has equally recorded an increase of about 200 per cent. I mention these three items as I feel that these are the minimum *sine qua non* of the food budget of the common people and should deserve the prior consideration of the Government in any scheme for a rational distribution of food supply.

There is no doubt that whenever the Government has sought to impose price control in respect of any commodity, it has led to chaos. The reason for it lies primarily in the fact that the Government always seeks to control prices without obtaining control of the total supply of the commodity. Price control can become successful if it is preceded by a complete control of the supply of the commodity. Price control has also been imposed sometimes on a commodity in its finished stage without controlling it in its unfinished stage. Thus the Government for some time controlled the price of rice without controlling the price of paddy.

In order to obtain control over the supply of various foodstuffs, the Government must first of all establish an Intelligence Bureau for compiling statistics of food production in various districts. This can be easily done through union boards and *panchayets*. Once the Government know the food supply in different parts of the province they will cease to talk vaguely about surpluses or deficits and they will then be able to formulate their policies on ascertained data.

On the available data it is clear that there will be deficit in food supply in the present year. The Hon'ble Commerce Member of the Government of India has himself admitted that. The first rice forecast for 1942-43 which was prepared towards the end of September or the beginning of October, put the outturn of the *aus* crop at 66 per cent. of the normal and that of the *aman* crop at 78 per cent. Trade estimates do not put the average outturn at more than 50 per cent. The imperative need therefore is to increase the food supply at once. The "Grow More Food Campaign" has succeeded in some parts of India, notably Madras. But its success in Bengal has been very doubtful. Its effect has been considerably nullified in Bengal on account of the action taken by the Government of Bengal, in encouraging

increased acreage of jute area. The Government should also take steps to stop all exports of rice from Bengal, pending determination of the actual stock position through an intelligent and reliable source and the probable demand within the province. I appreciate the necessity of inter-provincial trade. But I must stress that the capacity of Bengal to export rice can be correctly assessed only after a careful stock-taking.

The Government has also failed to understand the problem of demand concerning foodstuffs. They do not possess any correct statistics regarding the actual demand for the different articles of food in the various parts of the province. Nor have any steps been taken to co-ordinate demand and supply by arranging facilities for transport of foodstuffs. Large purchases either on behalf of Government organisations, Civil or Military, and private employers have often interfered in the past with the normal free play of demand and supply. The activities of all those purchasing agencies were absolutely unco-ordinated, and they often competed with each other and with private consumers by concentrating at about the same time on particular area or areas which might not be able to supply all these requirements. The result has been an undue rise in prices in these areas. But the Government, I understand, is now taking steps to see that all Government purchases are effected through one central organisation in order to obviate sudden fluctuations in demand in particular areas. But the Government must not forget that the distribution of the foodstuffs should be through the normal channels of trade.

Another sinister influence working on the demand side is the tendency of hoarding. Whenever there is scarcity of commodities it is a most common psychological experience that people want to hoard goods rather than money. Once hoarding of goods starts it leads to a vicious circle. Any increase in food supply will be cancelled by hoarding and the withdrawal of commodities from circulation. The Government must combat this psychological tendency by law and by total purchase of all available supplies accompanied by all-round rationing, if necessary.

I feel that the food problem has assumed most serious proportions. It must be tackled with speed and efficiency. If it is allowed to drift it may prove most menacing for the whole province. If an examination of the statistical positions reveals a shortage in the volume of foodstuffs available for public consumption, there can be no way out but rationing. There is no doubt that rationing would require a gigantic personnel of efficient officials. But it is better to adopt it in time rather than allow a few rich people to monopolise the available food supplies at the cost of the general public. I must emphasise here that in any scheme of rationing, distribution of foodstuffs should be effected through the usual and normal channels of trade and that no official or semi-official machinery should be allowed to oust private agencies.

I must warn the House and the Government that the outlook in respect of the food situation is very gloomy. The Government must at once appoint

a Committee of experts to advise it quickly to devise ways and means according to the lines I have already indicated. Unless the Government acts quickly and boldly we may soon experience food riots all over the province.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to support the amendment moved by my esteemed friend Maulvi Tamizuddin Khan. The Government motion is laconic in the sense that it does not express itself either way. It simply says it takes into consideration the situation in the province relating to the supply and distribution of foodstuff, coal, kerosene oil and cloths. Sir, we have heard with rapt attention the fine exposition of these problems yesterday from Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal, Mr. Tamizuddin Khan and others. Sir, I would take up one aspect of the question, the unprecedented strain that has been brought on the agricultural labourers of the province by this phenomenal rise in prices of food and other essential commodities of life. The census figures have revealed that not less than 30 per cent. of the agricultural population in Bengal are landless labourers. Nobody has yet expressed any concern for these unfortunate teeming millions of the land. Both the Government and other non-official institutions are anxious for the industrial labourers. Their case is nobody's case. There are proposals for dearness allowance but the Government is blind to the patent fact that these unfortunate victims of circumstances are starving for want of food and other necessaries of life. Their number is so large and their miseries so distressing that unless steps are taken in time to give them relief the country will inevitably be led to agrarian troubles and disturbances, the magnitude of which can better be imagined than described. Even among the landed cultivators more than 50 per cent of them have by now consumed their paddy and rice at their disposal because due to weather difficulties the outturn of last *aman* crop was very meagre. The price of foodstuff is rising by leaps and bounds. To add to the difficulties the Government of Bengal have announced their decision of growing jute on eight annas land. This fatal step goes directly counter to the "Grow More Food" campaign of the Government of Bengal. The reply given by Mr. T. D. Tyson, Secretary, Education, Health and Lands Department, on production of food in the Central Legislature on the 17th February would, I feel, open the eyes of the present Ministry of Bengal. He said that "as a result of the 'Grow More Food' campaign, for the 'kharif' season 8,100,000 acres of land had been brought under food crops, about half of this area by transfer from cotton. In 'kharif' season 3,000,000 more tons of food has been produced than in the previous year. Provinces had now been asked to undertake all-out production and to ensure that no desirable scheme was omitted merely for lack of funds. The Central Government had offered financial assistance for approved schemes. The post of Director of Agricultural Production had been created and he would advise the Provinces about their schemes". The Central Government has declared in no uncertain terms that they are ready to finance any desirable scheme of the Provincial Government and has peremptorily asked the Provincial Governments not to omit any of their schemes for lack of funds. But my apprehension is that the other provinces will take advantage of this declaration of the Central

Government but Bengal will go by default for want of any schemes by the present Ministry. The Government of Bengal always took their shelter under the plea that due to difficulties in transport the essential foodstuffs could not be supplied but the recent declaration of the Transport Member Sir Edward Benthal that movements of foodstuffs would have priority will, I think, remove those oft-quoted difficulties.

I want to deal with the control policy of the Government. I understand that after the creation of the post of Director of Civil Supplies, district and subdivision supply officers have been appointed all over the province. On their appointments the situation has deteriorated more than before. The corruptions of various description have crept in and have paralysed the whole system. The people are getting no supplies but are being harassed and tortured. There is no plan or scheme in the control. Without looking into the stock and the prevailing conditions they want to control prices but as soon as there is control all commodities disappear from the open market and are heaped in the black market which these supply officers never try to check or control for reasons best known to them. In respect of kerosene oil, in my subdivision of Kishoreganj, the system is that 75 per cent of the kerosene tin were distributed on control basis through permits while 25 per cent. of them were sold by the agents of the Burma Oil Company and other companies to their customers. On the plea of 25 per cent., these agents kept to themselves much more and their stocks were never examined and now on payment of a big sum for war efforts their quota has been raised to 50 per cent. and hence practically the control has now become a farce. Sir, I maintain that the position in the countryside, particularly that of the agricultural and landless population is very, very serious and unless steps are taken I think the country will be faced with a revolution in no time.

Mr. CIASUDDIN AHMED: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, আজ দুই দিন যাবৎ এই Houseএ যে সমস্যার আলোচনা হইতেছে তাহা সবচেয়ে বড় সমস্যা একথা বলা যেতে পারে। মানুষ সমস্ত কিছু ছেড়ে চলতে পারে, ঘর দরজা না থাকলে গাছতলায় থাকবার ব্যবস্থা করতে পারে, কাপড় কম হলেও হয়ত চলতে পারে। কিন্তু পেটের খোরাক না দিলে মানুষ কেন জীবজন্তুও বাঁচতে পারে না। বর্ত্তমানে খাদ্য-সমস্যা যে অত্যন্ত জটিল সমস্যা একথা স্বীকার করা উচিত। যুদ্ধের সময় এই সমস্যা আরও জটিল হয়ে পড়েছে এবং গভর্ণমেণ্টের পক্ষেও যে এ সমস্যার সমাধান করা শক্ত হয়েছে—সে বিষয়ে কোন সন্দেহ নাই। তবুও গভর্ণমেণ্টের যেটুকু ক্ষমতা আছে সেই ক্ষমতা এই সমস্যা সমাধানের দিকে নিয়োজিত করা একান্ত দরকার বলে মনে করি।

আমি মৈমনসিং জেলা সম্বন্ধে বলতে চাই। সারা ভারতের মধ্যে মৈমনসিং জেলা সব চেয়ে বড় জেলা। সেখানে ৬০ লক্ষ লোকের বসতি। মৈমনসিং জেলা পাটপ্রধান জেলা। উৎপন্ন দ্রব্যের মধ্যে পাটই সেখানে প্রধান ফসল। সুতরাং একথা logical conclusionএ আসে যেখানে পাট জন্মে বেশী সেখানে খাদ্য শস্য জন্মে কম পরিমাণে। মৈমনসিং জেলার কৃষকেরা সারা-বৎসরের খাদ্য বিভিন্ন স্থান থেকে নিয়ে এসে নিজেদের ছেলে-মেয়েসহ প্রতিপালিত হয়। মৈমনসিংবাসী অনেক কৃষক ব্যবসায়ী ব্রহ্ম দেশ এবং আসাম থেকে ধান চাউল এনে ব্যবসা করত এবং খেয়ে বাঁচত। ব্রহ্ম দেশ হইতে ধান চাউল আসা বন্ধ হইয়া গিয়াছে। দুঃখের বিষয় এইবার

যে সব মৈমনসিংবাসী ব্যবসায়ীরা আসামে ধান চাউল কিনিতে গিয়াছিল তাহাদের চার পাঁচশ নৌকা যাহাতে প্রায় ৬০।৭০ হাজার মণ চাউল ছিল, তাহারা যখন তাহাদের ধান চাউল বোঝাই করা নৌকা আসাম হতে বাংলাদেশে আনছিল সেই সময় এক প্রদেশ হইতে অন্য প্রদেশে ধান চাউল যাইতে পারিবে না এই Ordinance পাশ হয়। ধুবড়ীর কাছে নৌকা আসবার সঙ্গে সঙ্গে আসাম গভর্ণমেণ্টের পক্ষ থেকে পুলিশ এই সব নৌকা আটক করে এবং জনসাধারণকে লেলিয়ে দেয়। তারা নৌকা বোঝাই বহু ধান চাউল লুটতরাজ করে নিয়ে যায়। এইসব ব্যবসায়ীদের নৌকাগুলি আটক করে রাখা হয়েছে এবং তাহাদের অনেককে জেলে পুরা হয়েছে এবং কাহারও কাহারও নামে মামলা রুজু করা হয়েছে। তাদের উপর যে বিপদ উপস্থিত হয়েছে গভর্ণমেণ্টের এদিকে দৃষ্টি দিয়ে তাদের উদ্ধার করতে হবে এবং তাদের যে ক্ষতি হয়েছে সেই ক্ষতিপূরণের ব্যবস্থা করতে হবে। তারপর একথা বলতে চাই মৈমনসিংবাসী জনসাধারণের যে নিদারুণ দুঃখ দেখা দিয়েছে তা বলতে গেলে অনেক সময় লাগবে। শুধু এই কথাই বলতে চাই যে গভর্ণমেণ্ট নিজেও স্বীকার করেছেন যে মৈমনসিং deficient district। অতএব মৈমনসিংএর কথা সর্বাগ্রে বিবেচ্য। আমার suggestion এই যে বাংলা গভর্ণমেণ্ট আসাম গভর্ণমেণ্টের সঙ্গে সলাপরামর্শ করে আসাম থেকে ধান চাউল কিনে আনাইবার ব্যবস্থা করুন।

খাদ্যসমস্যা গভর্ণমেণ্টকে যেকোনরূপেই হউক মিটাইতে হইবে। সেইজন্য তাহাদের চেষ্টা করিতে হইবে। গভর্ণমেণ্টের পক্ষ থেকে License দিয়ে ধান চাউল কিনে এনে একত্র জমা করা দরকার। তারপর এই ধান চাউল deficit districtsএ supply করা দরকার। আমার মনে হয় মৈমনসিংবাসীদের license দিয়ে আসাম থেকে ধান চাউল কিনে আনবার ব্যবস্থা করলে মৈমনসিংবাসীদের অভাব খানিকটা দূর হতে পারে।

Mr. HARENDRA NATH DOLUI: Mr. Chairman, Sir, আজকার অপরাহ্ণে এই সভা-গৃহে সুফলা শস্যপূর্ণা সারা বাংলাদেশের খাদ্যাভাব সমস্যা সম্বন্ধে যে আলোচনা চল্‌ছে তাতে আমিও গুটিকয়েক কথা বল্‌তে চাই। বাংলাদেশে যে পরিমাণ খাদ্যশস্য উৎপন্ন হয় তাহাতে এদেশের অধিবাসীবৃন্দের যথেষ্ট হয় না একথা বোধ হয় কাহারও অবিদিত নাই। তার ওপর অজন্মা, অতিবৃষ্টি, অনাবৃষ্টি, প্লাবন, ঝঞ্ঝাবাত প্রভৃতি নৈসর্গিক উপদ্রবেরও অভাব নাই। আবার সারা বিশ্বের সমরানলের তাড়নায় পড়িয়া বহু সামরিক ও বেসামরিক অতিথির আবির্ভাবে বাংলা ভূমি শুকভাবাক্রান্ত হ'য়ে উঠেছে। এই দুর্দ্দিনে, এমতাবস্থায় এদেশে এখনও যেটুকু খাদ্যসামগ্রী পাওয়া যাচ্ছে তার মধ্য হ'তে বেশীর ভাগ অংশ যে কোথায় কোন দেশে চলে যাচ্ছে তার কি কেউ কোন খবর রাখছেন? দরিদ্র জনসাধারণের চোখের ওপর দিয়ে ও তাদের নাগালের অনেক দূর দিয়ে যে সকল তাদেরই খাদ্য সম্ভার অতি উচ্চ মূল্যে চলে যাচ্চে তজ্জন্য ঐ হতভাগাদের চোখের জল মোচন ক'রতে কে এগিয়ে যাচ্চেন? তারা নিরুপায় ও নিঃসহায় অবস্থায় তিল তিল কোরে যে দেহপাত ক'র্‌ছে তার প্রতীকারের পন্থা কোথায়?

শক্তিহীন ও সহায়হীন জনসাধারণ একমাত্র সরকার বাহাদুরের মুখাপেক্ষী হ'য়ে অনেক করুণ আবেদন নিবেদন ক'র্‌ছে কিন্তু জনপ্রিয় সরকার বাহাদুর যে কি ব্যবস্থা অবলম্বন ক'র্‌ছেন তার ২।১টী বিবরণ আজ এই প্রসঙ্গে বোলেই আমি ক্ষান্ত হব।

মেদিনীপুর জেলার অন্তর্গত ঘাটাল একটী ছোটখাট বিকিকিনির কেন্দ্রস্থল। ওখানে শীলাবতী নদী নগরটীকে দ্বিধা বিভক্ত কোরে সাগরসঙ্গমে বরাবর চলে আস্‌ছে। তারই কৃপায় কলিকাতা প্রভৃতি বড় বড় বন্দর হ'তে রাশি রাশি ব্যবসার সামগ্রী আমদানি রপ্তানি হয় এবং সেই সূত্রে ওখানে ব্যবসায়ীগণেরও বেশ একটু সমাবেশ আছে।

ওখানকার মহকুমা ম্যাজিষ্ট্রেট বাহাদুর জনসাধারণের মঙ্গল কামনায় বা মঙ্গল কামনার ছলে যে একটী পরামর্শ সমিতি গঠন কোরেছেন তাতে জনগণের সুবিধা হওয়া দূরে থাকুক অধিকন্তু তাদের দুর্দ্দশার দিকে আরও ঠেলে দেওয়া হচ্ছে। পরামর্শ সমিতির অধিকাংশ সভ্যই হচ্ছেন ব্যবসাদার। তাঁদের যুক্তি পরামর্শ উক্ত মহকুমা ম্যাজিষ্ট্রেটের মূলমন্ত্র। ক্রেতাগণের সুবিধা অসুবিধার দিকে তাঁর কোনই দৃষ্টি নাই। অতিরিক্ত মূল্যে বিক্রয় করার অপরাধে অপরাধী কোন ব্যবসায়ী ওখানে কখনও অভিযুক্ত এবং দণ্ডিত হয়েছেন কি না আমাদের শ্রুতিগোচর হয় নাই এবং ইহার কারণও অনেকে সন্দেহের চক্ষে দেখেন তা সত্য। অধুনা বাংলা গভর্ণমেণ্টের গেজেটে প্রকাশিত যে হুকুমজারি হ'য়ে থাকে তা প্রতিপালিত হয় নাই বোলে মনে হয়। মেদিনীপুর জেলা হইতে ধান্য চাউল প্রভৃতি অন্য জেলায় যাইতে পারিবে না বলিয়া সম্প্রতি যে আদেশজারি হইয়াছে তাহা কি প্রতিপালিত হয়েছে। জেলা সরবরাহ কর্ম্মচারীর নিষেধ সত্ত্বেও রাশি রাশি ধান্য ও চাউল ঘাটাল বন্দর হইতে প্রতিদিন মহকুমা ম্যাজিষ্ট্রেটের গোপন হুকুমে অন্যত্র চ'লে যাচ্ছে। ফলে ধান্য, চাউল ও অন্যান্য দ্রব্যের মূল্য অতিরিক্ত উচ্চে উঠায় তত্রস্থ অধিবাসীগণের কষ্টের সীমা নাই। ঠিক এইরূপ ব্যবস্থা যদি সরকার বাহাদুর আরও কয়েকদিন অবলম্বন করেন তবে দুর্ভিক্ষ রাক্ষসীর করাল কবলে দেশবাসীগণকে সত্বর কবলিত হ'তে হবে ইহা নিশ্চিত ও নিঃসন্দেহ।

এখন সরকার বাহাদুরের তথা মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীর আপ্রাণ চেষ্টা হউক যেন দেশবাসীর অন্নবস্ত্রাভাব অচিরে দূরীভূত হয়। প্রত্যেক জেলায় জেলায় এবং তদন্তর্গত প্রত্যেক গ্রামে গ্রামে নিরপেক্ষ তদন্ত কমিটীর দ্বারা অনুসন্ধান ক'রতে হবে যে কোথায় কোন্ খাদ্যের অভাবে দেশবাসী কষ্ট পাচ্ছে এবং সেই সঙ্গে সঙ্গে সেই স্থানে সেই দ্রব্য আমদানী হয় তার সত্বর ব্যবস্থা অবলম্বন করা উচিত। এ বিষয়ে মাননীয় ডাক্তার সান্যাল মহোদয় এই সভায় যে সংশোধন প্রস্তাব এনেছেন আশা করি যদি সরকার বাহাদুর তাহা অনুসরণ করেন তবে এই সমস্যার কতক সমাধান হ'তে পারে।

এই কয়েকটী কথা বোলে আমি আমার বক্তব্য শেষ ক'রতে চাই।

Maulvi RAJIBUDDIN TARAFDAR: ডেপুটী স্পীকার স্যার! বাংলার অন্ন সমস্যা সম্বন্ধে যথেষ্ট বক্তৃতা হয়ে গেছে এবং এর ভয়াবহ অবস্থা সম্বন্ধে অনেকেই অনেক প্রকার মত প্রকাশ কোরেছেন। সময় কম সুতরাং আমাকে বেশী বলতে পারা যাবে না। দেশের সর্ব্বত্র একই অবস্থা, আমি কাল বগুড়া থেকে চিঠি পেয়েছি যে ওখানে কাঁচি ওজনের /৪ সের কোরে চাউল টাকায় বিক্রয় হচ্চে। এ সম্বন্ধে কেহ কেহ বোলেছেন যে ইংরাজ রাজত্বে এই দেড়শ বছরের মধ্যে এ রকম ভয়াবহ ব্যাপার হয় নি। আমি বলব যে এই পৃথিবীর সৃষ্টি থেকে আজ পর্য্যন্ত এ রকম হয়েছে কি না সন্দেহ। এই রকম যে একটা অনর্থের সৃষ্টি হয়েছে এ কি কোরে হ'ল এ সম্বন্ধে গভীর চিন্তা করা দরকার। এটা sentimentএর কথা নয়। এ বিষয়টা যখন গুরুতর তখন এর প্রতীকার সম্বন্ধে ভালভাবে চিন্তা ক'রতে হবে এবং এখনই ক'রতে হবে। অনেক দেরী হয়ে গেছে এবং ভুলও অনেক হয়ে গেছে। আমি তাই দুই একটী কথা বলব।

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Sir, if the House continues to sit longer there is risk of our life due to possible air-raid.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: If the honourable member is afraid, he can go home.

Mr. CHAIRMAN (Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin): Order, order.

Maulvi RAJIBUDDIN TARAFDAR: অনেকে বোলেছেন যে বাংলাতে খাদ্য শস্য কিছু কম হ'ত এবং ব্রহ্মদেশ থেকে নিয়ে এসে এর ক্ষতিপূরণ করা হয়েছে। এবার ব্রহ্মদেশ হস্তচ্যুত হয়েছে, সেখান থেকে ধান চাল আস্‌বার উপায় নাই, কাজেই সমস্যা আরও ভয়ঙ্কর আকার ধারণ কোরেছে। এটা যে সম্পূর্ণ সত্য একথা আমি স্বীকার করব না। কারণ Burma থেকে যেমন ধান চাল আস্‌তো তেমনি বাংলা হ'তেও অনেক চাল বিদেশে যেতো। এখন Burma থেকে যেমন ধান চাল আস্‌বার উপায় নাই তেমনি সমুদ্রপথে বাংলার চাল ভারতের বাহিরে যাওয়াও বন্ধ হয়েছে। বরং "grow more food" propaganda করে খাদ্যশস্য অনেক বৃদ্ধি করা হয়েছে, বিশেষ করে যে প্রচার-কার্য্য কোন দলগত ভাব নিয়ে নয়, কোন জাতিগতভাবে হয় নাই তাতে একেবারে যে বেশী কিছু জন্মায় নি একথা বল্‌লে চল্‌বে না। আমার কথা হচ্চে Burma হস্তচ্যুত হয়েছে, সেখান থেকে ধান চাল আসে না বোলেই যে অনর্থের সৃষ্টি হয়েছে, একেবারে খাওয়া পড়াব এত অভাব হয়েছে, টাকায় ৵৪ সের কাঁচি ওজনে চাউল কিনে খেতে হবে এ কথাব কোন মানে হয় না। এর মধ্যে নিশ্চয়ই কোন বদমায়েসী আছে; তা আমি উদ্‌ঘাটন কোর্‌ব। অনেকেই বলেছেন বাংলাব বাহিব থেকে বহু লোক এসেছে, সৈন্য সামন্ত এসেছে এবং Burma থেকেও বহু evacuees এসেছে; একথাগুলি আমি স্বীকার করি কিন্তু পক্ষান্তরে বাংলা থেকে যে বহু লোক বাহিরে চলে গেছে এ কথা ভুলে গেলে চলবে কেন? আজকাল মুটে মেলে না, গাড়োয়ানের অভাব, বল্‌তে গেলে বিদেশী লোক প্রায়ই চলে গেছে; শুধু তাই নয়, মাড়োয়ারীও বাংলা দেশ হ'তে সাফ হয়ে গেছে। অর্থাৎ আমি প্রমাণ করতে চাই বাংলাতে যেমন বহু লোক এসেছে তেম্‌নি লক্ষ লক্ষ লোক বাংলাব বাহিরেও চলে গেছে। সুতরাং চাল-ধানের জন্য ইহা হয়েছে এ কথা বল্‌তে পারি না। এর পিছনে যে অপকর্ম্ম আছে সে সম্বন্ধে ২।১টী কথা বোল্‌ব। এখন কথা উঠেছে price control উঠিয়ে দাও। প্রথমে গোড়ায় এই চীৎকারই উঠেছিল price control কর। যেমনি price control এদেশে আরম্ভ কর্‌লে অম্‌নি "বোচ্‌কা শাম্‌লাতে নৌকা ডুবে গেল"। যেমন price control আরম্ভ হ'ল অম্‌নি একটা হুড়োহুড়ি পড়ে গেল, গভর্ণমেণ্ট অফিসাব থেকে আরম্ভ কোরে সাধারণ বেওয়া বিধবা পর্য্যন্ত সকলে একধাব থেকে ধান, চাল, লবণ, কেরোসিন কিন্‌তে আরম্ভ করলেন। (এই সময় ডেপুটী স্পীকার সময় উত্তীর্ণ হয়েছে বলিয়া বক্তৃতা করতে বারণ করেন কিন্তু কোয়ালীশন দলের অনেক সদস্য সময় বৃদ্ধির জন্য অনুরোধ করায় ডেপুটী স্পীকার আরও ২ মিনিট সময় দেন) (বক্তা বলেন) অনেকেই সামর্থ্য অনুযায়ী ৪।৫শ মণ পর্য্যন্ত চাউল, লবণ, ডাল কিনেছেন। এইভাবে পুঁজিওয়ালারা চাউল, ডাল, লবণ গুদামজাত কোরেছে, বেচ্‌বার লোক নাই। দাম আরও চড়িবে এই আশায় গৃহস্থ যারা প্রতি বৎসর প্রয়োজনের অতিরিক্ত ধান বেচিয়া ফেল্‌তো তারাও এবার বেঁচে নাই ববং সকলে সাধ্যমত কিনিয়া রাখিতেছে।

এখন আপনারা বিবেচনা কোরে দেখুন এর প্রতিকার কি? মৌলবী গিয়াসুদ্দীন সাহেব বক্তৃতায় বোলেছেন যে এক জেলা থেকে অন্য জেলায় ধান-চাল যেতে দেয় না। স্থানীয় পুঁজিওয়ালারা সস্তায় কিনিয়া উহা বৈশাখ-জ্যৈষ্ঠ মাসে কৃষককে বেশী দামে ঐ ধান চাল দিবে এই জন্য সেখানকার মহাজনেরা অন্য জেলার ব্যাপারী তাড়াইয়া ওত পেতে বসে আছে, সস্তায় কিন্‌বে। উহারা বাহিরের লোককে হাট থেকে কিন্‌তে দিবে কেন? যার শক্তি আছে সেই কিন্‌ছে। অনেক গভর্ণমেণ্ট অফিসারকে advance বেতন ও মহার্ঘ ভাতা দেওয়া হয়েছে গভর্ণমেণ্ট

কর্ম্মচারীদের, তাঁরাও কিন্‌ছেন। এখন বেচবার লোক আর নাই। সর্ব্বত্র একটা cry উঠেছে /২ সের কোরে চাউল টাকায় হবে। এর একটা উপায় আছে। বাংলার যারা কৃষক এবং যে মজুর এই রকম লোককে এমন licence দিতে হবে খাওয়ার অতিরিক্ত যার বাড়ীতে আছে এমন ব্যবসায়ী আমানতকারী সে ঐ লাইসেন্স দেখিলেই বিক্রয় করতে বাধ্য হয়। এই রকম ভাবে যদি লাইসেন্স issue করা যায় তাহলে যারা stock কোরেছে তারা দেখ্‌বে যে লাইসেন্স দেখালেই যখন খাওয়ার অতিরিক্ত জিনিস তাদের দিতে বাধ্য হব, তখন অনেকেই খাদ্য জিনিস বিক্রয় করিয়া ফেলিবে। বাজারে ধান, চাল, লবণ সস্তা হয়ে যাবে, তখন ক্রেতা অপেক্ষা বিক্রেতার সংখ্যা বৃদ্ধি পাবে। কৃষক ও মজুরদের রক্ষাকেই বলে দেশরক্ষা। কবি গেয়েছেন—

কৃষি ও কৃষক যদি থাকে পদতলে,
সে দেশ নিশ্চয় জেন যাবে রসাতলে।

Adjournment.

The House was then adjourned at 7-35 p.m. till 3-45 p.m. on Friday, the 19th February, 1943, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the Provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Friday, the 19th February, 1943, at 3-45 p.m.

Present:

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. SYED JALALUDDIN HASHEMY) in the Chair, 7 Hon'ble Ministers and 191 members.

Questions and Answers.

(Unstarred question No. 10 of the 17th February was called and again held over.)

(Unstarred question No. 11 was next called.)

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Before I begin putting supplementary questions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to draw your attention to one fact.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will first take up today's questions and then I will take up held-over questions of the 17th and 18th February.

(Starred question No. 43 was then called.)

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, what about starred questions Nos. 41 and 42? These were held over from yesterday. These should be taken up first.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Dr. Sanyal, I had arranged that I would take up the held-over questions of the 17th and 18th first and then I would take up the questions of today. Now I think it would be better to take up today's questions first and then the held-over questions.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: We should start with the held-over questions first.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Don't you think, Sir, that it is better to finish the old questions first and then try to become up-to-date?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let us finish the questions of the 17th.

(Unstarred question No. 11 was called again.)

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, before I ask supplementary questions with regard to unstarred question No. 11, I want to draw your attention to one omission. Here in the reply it is stated that the audit report is laid on the library table. I asked for the audit report, but there is no audit report on the library table. I was given to understand that this extract from the statement is the audit report. I made an enquiry from your department, and I do not think that this can be called

an audit report. There must be some omission somewhere. I asked for a statement and also for an audit report. The statement has been furnished, but the audit report has not been given.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: (Pointing out) This is the audit report. For your convenience, it is added here.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Where is the audit report? There is no audit report. This is simply a statement.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This is what we have got from Government.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Sir, in my question I wanted an audit report. In the answer a statement has been made that the audit report is placed on the library table, but there is no audit report on the library table. I want to know from the Government whether the audit report was submitted or not.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This is the whole thing. This is an extract from the audit report.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Not the whole report. Sir, the statement you refer to is a statement referred to in reply to clause (*d*) of question No. 11. I am referring to answer (*a*)(*iii*), viz., "An extract of the audit report is laid on the library table." This is a different thing.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I suggest that the unstarred questions that were left over previously may be taken up today?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: They are being taken up today.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I could not quite follow the honourable member. I find the question is to lay a copy of the audit report on the library table for the year 1938. My answer is, "an extract of the audit report is laid on the library table." What else?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: There is no extract of the audit report.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: When a question like that is answered, the procedure is that it is laid on the library table.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: That is not laid on the library table. We have not received any extract from the audit report.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: We will look into it. But if there is none, I have nothing to do. This is a matter of the Assembly Department.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: I am not placing any blame on the Hon'ble Minister or on the Legislative Assembly Department, but something must have happened.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will make an enquiry.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: In the meantime may I suggest that the question may be held over?

(The question was held over.)

Unstarred question No. 10.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: What is the position of question No. 10?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is held over. The Nawab Bahadur is very seriously ill. He has got serious trouble in his teeth.

STARRED QUESTION

(to which oral answer was given)

Proposed Dacca Medical College.

***41. Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state when the opening of the Dacca Medical College will take place?

MINISTER in charge of the PUBLIC HEALTH and LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu): The proposal for the establishment of a Medical College at Dacca is still under the consideration of Government and no decision has as yet been reached in the matter.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when the Government are expecting to come to a decision in the matter?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: It is extremely difficult to say that in view of the various difficulties which have arisen in consequence of the war. First of all, site has got to be selected. Secondly, arrangements, for buildings have got to be made, which is practically an impossibility at the present emergency.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether steps have been taken to remove these difficulties?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Steps are being taken to meet these difficulties. The latest effort was that a conference was arranged between the Government and the Vice-Chancellor of the Dacca University which was to take place in the beginning of this month, but unfortunately the disturbances in connection with the University have held back the conference, because the Vice-Chancellor could not come and join the conference.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the amount already raised for the purpose?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I am not in a position to tell you that.

Unstarred question No. 12.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: May I draw your attention, Sir, to unstarred question No. 12, regarding shortage of small coins? It may be directed either to the Hon'ble Chief Minister or the Hon'ble Finance Minister.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is a Central subject. However, I will look into it.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: If it is a Central subject, it will come under the Home Department which is the channel of communication for any matter that the Government of Bengal may seek to represent. The position appears to be rather anomalous.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH SEN: On a point of information, Sir. Is the unstarred question No. 12 held over?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes.

(The question was held over.)

UNSTARRED QUESTION

(answer to which was laid on the table)

Giving effect to the recommendations of Rent Reduction Committee and of Land Revenue Commission.

13. Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state whether Government contemplate to give effect to—

(*i*) the recommendations of rent reduction Enquiry Committee; and

(*ii*) the Land Revenue Commission and the suggestion of the Special Officer thereon?

(*b*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when it is to be given effect to?

MINISTER in charge of the REVENUE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee): (*a*)(*i*) The Committee have not yet submitted their report.

(*ii*) Under consideration of Government.

(*b*) Does not arise.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: With reference to answer (*a*)(*i*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when the Committee sat last?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I have been told that the Committee did not sit for quite a long time in view of the fact that there had been a number of deaths of members of the Committee and that the vacancies caused thereby had not been filled up.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the number of deaths had been such that there could be no quorum of the Committee?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: The names of the members of the Committee appointed under Resolution No. 14972 L.R., dated the 29th July, 1938, are as follows:—

(1) Chairman, *ex-officio*—Member, Board of Revenue.

Members.

(2) Mr. Kadir Baksh, M.L.C.
(3) Khan Bahadur Nazirudddin Ahmad, M.L.C.
(4) Maulvi Abdul Bari, M.L.A.
(5) Mr. Muhammad Abdul Jabbar Palwan, M.L.A.
(6) Maulvi Mafizuddin Chaudhury, M.L.A. (of Balurghat).
(7) Mr. Aftab Hossain Joardar, M.L.A.
(8) Khan Bahadur Maulvi Jalaluddin Ahmad, M.L.A.
(9) Maulvi Abdul Wahab Khan, M.L.A.
(10) Mr. Upendra Nath Edbar, M.L.A.
(11) Mr. Patiram Roy, M.L.A.
(12) Mr. J. N. Basu, M.L.A.
(13) Maharaj Kumar Uday Chand Mahtab, M.L.A.
(14) Mr. Haripada Chattopadhyaya, M.L.A.
(15) Mr. Rasik Lal Biswas, M.L.A.
(16) Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhury, M.L.A.
(17) Mr. G. Morgan, C.I.E., M.L.A.
(18) The Director of Land Records and Surveys, Bengal, *ex-officio*, who will also act as Secretary to the Committee.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how many of these members have died and whether the Government are awaiting further deaths?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: With reference to the first part of my honourable friend's question, the number of deaths can be counted from amongst the members of the two Houses of the Legislature.

With regard to the second part, the Committee was appointed in July, 1938, and our predecessors were in office from 29th July, 1938, to 17th December, 1941. Therefore, this Government cannot be imputed with the suggestion made in the second part of the question of the honourable member.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Government is a continuity.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the present Government which came into office in December, 1941, did make any attempt to appoint members in the vacancies caused by the deaths of members?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: So far as I am aware this was a Committee of the House and the present Revenue Minister is not even a member of the Committee.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the Government are considering the desirability of dissolving the Committee in view of the subsequent developments, namely, a very extensive enquiry by the Land Revenue Commission and the steps which the Government have been considering to take following that Commission's report?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I am grateful for the suggestion made by the honourable member This day I sent for the Director of Land Records and I have been told that it will be possible for this Committee to finish its report within the next three or four months If nothing happens then Government will certainly consider the suggestion made by the honourable member

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the Government is considering the desirability of having a further sum of money spent on this Committee by allowing them a lease of life for another three or four months or whether Government are thinking of taking up the broader question which has been already enquired into by the Land Revenue Commission?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Certainly I shall bear in mind the suggestion made by the honourable member. I have to consider the legality of the step proposed as to whether the Government is in a position to dissolve the Committee.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: In view of the answer given by the Hon'ble Minister that the Committee will meet and finish its labours within the next three or four months, and in view of the fact that the Committee can meet, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the Government made any effort to see that the Committee might meet after their assumption of office?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Attempts were made by the Secretary of the Committee to obtain suggestions in writing from the members of the Committee, but they have not been successful.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that this Committee was not appointed by this House, but it was a Committee appointed by the Government of Bengal—the Hon'ble Revenue Minister himself?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I am not sure.

Dr NALINAKSHA SANYAL: It was not a Committee appointed by this House.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: The Chairman of the Committee is not the Revenue Minister, but the Member, Board of Revenue. I shall, however, make an enquiry. I shall try to obtain its report if possible.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: With reference to answer (*a*)(*ii*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what are the difficulties that stand in the way of Government giving effect to the recommendations of the Land Revenue Commission, in view of the fact that the report of the Commission together with the report of the Special Officer appointed by Government was discussed both in this House as well as in the Council?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: It is not possible for me to give a proper account of the difficulties that stand in the way of Government in answer to a short supplementary question, but at the time of the Budget discussion on this point, I will surely give my reasons.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Cleaning surface shelters in Calcutta.

***43. Sir HENRY BIRKMYRE:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Civil Defence Co-ordination (Public Health and Local Self-Government) Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact—

(*i*) that a number of sweepers were recently appointed by the Calcutta Corporation to clean the surface shelters in Calcutta; and

(*ii*) that, in spite of the appointment of these sweepers, the majority of the surface shelters have continued to be in a filthy condition?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps, if any, do the Government propose to take to ensure that the surface shelters are properly cleaned and kept in a satisfactory condition?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: (*a*) (*i*) Yes.

(*ii*) It is true that many are found in a dirty condition but this is by no means true of the majority.

(*b*) Each Post Warden of the A.R.P. Wardens' Service is being furnished with a list of the shelters in his jurisdiction specifying the shelters allotted to each sweeper and showing the name and designation of the Corporation Officer who is responsible for conservancy in the area and to whom report should be made if shelters are not regularly cleaned.

Mr. A. F. STARK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether these lists of shelters have actually been furnished to the A.R.P. Wardens?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: In some cases they have been furnished and they are still in the process of being furnished to others.

Mr. A. F. STARK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Wardens are to supervise the cleaning of these shelters and will the sweepers be under the orders of the Wardens?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I don't think I can go so far as to place the Corporation sweepers under the Wardens, but so far as the other part of the question is concerned, the Post Wardens may be instructed to supervise the cleaning of shelters.

Mr. M. A. H. ISPAHANI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state, with reference to answer (*a*)(*iii*), whether it is based on his experience or the reports received by him?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: So far as the dirty condition is concerned, I have not got such experience as my honourable friend may claim to have. But I have received reports and also in some cases I have seen the dirty condition.

Babu NARENDRA NARAYAN CHAKRABARTY: কলিকাতায় আজ পর্য্যন্ত ৭।৮টি জাপানী বিমান আক্রমণ হইয়াছে। মন্ত্রী মহাশয় অবগত আছেন কি যে যখন শত্রুর আক্রমণ হয় তখন এই সমস্ত shelterএ অনেক লোক আশ্রয় গ্রহণ করিয়া থাকে?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I think so, and that is exactly why these shelters are put up.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the condition of the slit trenches at present?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: The slit trenches are there waiting to receive people in case of air raids.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if these slit trenches are generally filled with water, with the result that they cause a great deal of nuisance?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: That difficulty was experienced during the monsoon.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that as a result of water getting accumulated in these slit trenches, mosquitoes are bred there?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: These questions were raised during the last session of the Legislature and Government admitted that some of these slit trenches had been the breeding ground of mosquitoes.

Mr. A. F. STARK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the Wardens have instructions to remove beggars from the shelters?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Wardens can certainly be instructed to do that, but the most effective way to do that would be to set up a Beggars' Home which the Government is at present considering.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps Government propose to take in order to remove this inconvenience due to water-logging in slit trenches?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Government will take up that question when the problem will really become a live one. But we hope in the meantime victory will be achieved, and there will be no necessity for using these slit trenches during the monsoon.

Removal of beggars from Calcutta.

***44. Mr. J. H. SPELLER:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) when do Government propose to introduce the necessary legislation for the collection and removal of beggars from Calcutta or, alternatively, to issue an order under the Defence of India Rules; and

(*ii*) when is it expected that the beggars' camp at Mahalandi, Murshidabad district, will be completed and ready for occupation?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether the *kutcha* huts and buildings, which Government decided to erect until bricks were available, have been completed and are ready for occupation; and

(*ii*) whether it is possible to erect a temporary retaining fence until bricks are available for a compound wall?

(*c*) Is it a fact that managers and other staff have been appointed for the beggars' camp?

(*d*) If the answer to (*c*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) when were they appointed;

(*ii*) what are they being paid; and

(*iii*) how are they at present being employed?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: (*a*) (*i*) During the current session of this House.

(*ii*) By the end of May.

(*b*) (*i*) No.

(*ii*) No; bricks are already being manufactured and the building of the *pucca* wall is not expected to take any longer now than would the construction of a temporary retaining fence for which materials will have to be collected anew.

(*c*) The Controller and 6 managers have been appointed and a few appointments have also been made to clerical and menial posts.

(*d*) (*i*) and (*ii*) A statement is laid on the Library Table.

(*iii*) Two managers are in Murshidabad district watching the progress of construction, and the remainder of the staff is engaged in formulating proposals for the multifarious matters which require to be determined preparatory to the inauguration of any such scheme, e.g., preparing estimates of the scale and cost of provision of food, clothing and equipment, and arranging for their purchase; framing rules of management and discipline, and arranging details of internal administration; also in arranging temporary accommodation in Calcutta for approximately 1,000 beggars pending completion of the Homes at Mahalandi.

Mr. J. H. SPELLER: Will the Hon'ble Minister be good enough to say, in respect of answer (*a*) (*v*), on what date he proposes to move the consideration of the Bill?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: So far as the fixation of date is concerned, it is not exactly in my hands but, as the honourable member is probably aware, a Bill was circulated in the House yesterday and an opportunity will be taken as early as possible to take the leave of the House to introduce it, and take it into consideration and get it passed.

Mr. J. H. SPELLER: In this session, Sir?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: In this session.

Mr. J. H. SPELLER: Will the Hon'ble Minister be good enough to say whether necessary accommodation, arising out of (*d*) (*vii*), has been arranged in Calcutta for the one thousand beggars pending completion of the Homes at Mahalandi?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Well, at present I think I am in a position to give a hopeful answer to the effect, "yes," although, as has been the lot of Government in connection with Beggars' Homes we are still being pursued by people connected with the manufacture of military and war equipments and if we can survive that pursuit we shall certainly do full justice to this question.

Babu NARENDRA NARAYAN CHAKRABARTY: কলিকাতায় বর্ত্তমানে ভিক্ষুকের সংখ্যা কত এবং মহালন্দিতে ভিক্ষুকদের থাকবার যে ব্যবস্থা করা হয়েছে তাতে কত ভিক্ষুকের স্থান হতে পারে মন্ত্রী মহাশয় বল্‌তে পারেন কি ?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: The present estimate is that there are about 5,000 beggars in Calcutta and the Vagrants' Home in Mahalandi has been designed to accommodate the entire lot.

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: With reference to answer (*c*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state as to what is the number of clerks and menials appointed for the Beggars' Home?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: There is one head clerk; and there are three clerks and one typist. As regards menials, I am afraid I am not in a position to give the number here.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister consider the desirability of not including people of other provinces when the Beggars' Home is established?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I am afraid I am not in a position to say anything on that beyond what is provided in the Bill itself. It might require some scrutiny of the Bill in order to give an accurate answer, but at the same time it is hoped that the very enactment of a Bill of this character will scare away some people, especially upcountry people who have found Calcutta to be a veritable home for making an income by begging.

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the number of Muslim clerks and managers appointed for this purpose?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: As regards Managers, there have been three Muslim Managers and three Hindu Managers. As regards clerks, I feel sure that the parity has been maintained, although I do not find it from papers here.

Mr. M. A. F. HIRTZEL: As regards the Hon'ble Minister's reference to a beggar population of 5,000 in Calcutta and to the up-counrtymen who find it a profitable thing to come to Calcutta, will he be pleased to say whether the beggar population is increasing or decreasing or is stationary?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: A sort of a census was taken some time ago and we have proceeded on the basis of the figures then made available. As regards the present position as to whether the beggar population is on the increase or on the decrease or is stationary, I am afraid I cannot elucidate that point with any degree of accuracy in view of the fact that no recent census has been taken. But we take it that with the air-raids on Calcutta some exodus of beggars also must have taken place along with the exodus of other parts of the population. In any case we feel that accommodation for five thousand beggars at Mahalandi ought to meet the exigencies of the situation.

Mr. ANANDI LAL PODDAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is going to engage those beggars who are fit to work in some sort of work?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Yes, that is the idea.

Mr. ANANDI LAL PODDAR: What will be the nature of that work?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: That will depend on the condition of the beggars themselves.

Mr. A. F. STARK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how the one thousand beggars will be selected—I mean, what type of beggars will be selected for the temporary accommodation?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: These one thousand beggars will be selected on the basis of their health, because it is intended that as we cannot accommodate more than one thousand beggars in the

places we have secured in Calcutta, the selection is to be made from the point of view of disease and infirmity, particularly diseases of an infectious nature. Those who have been suffering from infectious diseases will be secured and sent to be segregated to these Homes.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state where this temporary Home is situated?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: It is somewhere towards the east of Calcutta.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state as to who will be the authority to select these one thousand beggars?

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: Will it be a Committee of the Progressive Coalition Party?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Well, if it is a Committee of the Progressive Coalition Party, I might invite my friend to come over to that party and be on the Committee! Speaking seriously, the selection will be made in the first instance by a Magistrate as contemplated under the Bill which is going to be enacted, assisted by doctors, as provided in the Bill.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Sir, I have not received my reply. Where is the place where temporary arrangement has been made? The Hon'ble Minister has said "somewhere in the east of Calcutta." I submit, if it is not a military secret, if there is no danger in exposing the secret, will he be pleased to tell us where it is actually situated?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I am not in a position to give the honourable member the address of the premises.

Opening of Fire-lanes in Bustee areas in Calcutta.

***45. Mr. M. A. F. HIRTZEL:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department (Civil Defence Co-ordination) be pleased to state whether it is a fact that about a year ago Government decided to carry out a scheme for opening fire-lanes in *bustee* areas in order to provide access for fire engines?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the number of fire-lanes in the *bustee* areas in which they have been opened under this scheme?

(*c*) If no fire-lanes have yet been opened, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons for the apparent lack of progress with this scheme?

(*d*) What steps, if any, do Government now propose to take to complete the scheme?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: (*a*) It was decided to make an experiment in opening fire-lanes in one *bustee*, viz., Bhukailash *Bustee* in Kidderpore.

(*b*) The opening of fire-lanes in this *bustee* is nearing completion; three-fourths of the demolition required has been carried out.

(*c*) Before the structures in this *bustee* selected for demolition could be demolished, it was considered necessary to provide alternative accommodation in the same neighbourhood, and this accommodation had to be constructed.

(*d*) Proposals have been framed for opening fire-lanes in three other *bustees*; investigations go to show that it will not be necessary to provide alternative accommodation in these cases, and these three schemes are expected to be taken up shortly.

Mr. M. A. F. HIRTZEL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to inform the House the date on which it was decided to make the experiment and the date when it is expected that the experiment will be completed?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I am not in a position to supply the date just at the present moment, but I do agree that there has been some delay which ought to have been avoided but could not be avoided having regard to the very peculiar difficulties through which the city is now passing, particularly in the matter of securing housing materials for alternative residence of the people to be de-housed

Mr. M. A. F. HIRTZEL: May I take it from the Hon'ble Minister that the answer which he has just given is to be taken as an assurance that similar delays will be avoided as much as possible in respect of *bustees*?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I have already indicated in the answer to question (*d*) that where there is no question of providing alternative accommodation, the schemes are expected to be taken up shortly and pushed through with greater expedition.

Mr. M. A. F. HIRTZEL: The Hon'ble Minister has stated that the schemes are expected to be taken up shortly. Will he please give the House an assurance that the schemes will be taken up shortly?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I think, as at present arranged, the schemes will be taken up shortly, but at the same time I might remind my honourable friend that air-raids in Calcutta have not assumed such serious proportions as were originally anticipated.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what arrangements Government have made for payment of compensation to those *bustee* people whose lands were acquired by Government for the purpose?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I want notice.

Mr. AHMED ALI MRIDHA: With reference to answer (*d*) in which it is said that proposals have been framed for opening fire-lanes in three other *bustees*, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what are the three places for which these proposals have been framed?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: The first one, as I have indicated, is Bhukailash and the other three are, one in Central Calcutta and another in North Calcutta, but I could not give you any information about the third.

Mr. M. A. H. ISPAHANI: Is it the intention of the Hon'ble Minister to carry on experiments until the time when air-raids actually assume serious proportions?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: As at present expected, air-raids are not likely to assume serious proportions.

Mr. M. A. H. ISPAHANI: Has the Hon'ble Minister any information to this effect?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I have got no information but only appreciation.

Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Is the Hon'ble Minister gambling with the lives of the poorer people who live in the *bustees*, because these *bustees* have practically got no opening in case of a serious fire. I think it is criminal neglect on the part of Government not to have taken up this question earlier

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: In so far as it is a question, I entirely repudiate the suggestion made by the Hon'ble Leader of the Opposition.

Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: No action has been taken—is it because only the poorer people are involved?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: That suggestion has got no basis whatsoever.

Mr. M. A. H. ISPAHANI: Is it because the *bustees* are occupied by Muslims?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: That again is incorrect

Distribution of Government contracts.

***48. Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Communications and Works Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the principle, if any, followed by the Government with respect to the distribution of contracts in different branches of these departments between the Muslims and non-Muslims; and

(*ii*) the amount of money drawn and the percentage of contracts obtained by the Muslim contractors during 1941-42?

(*b*) Is it a fact that Muslim contractors get less than 3 per cent. contracts in these departments?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what action, if any, he proposes to take in the matter?

MINISTER in charge of the COMMUNICATIONS and WORKS DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmed): (*a*)(*i*) The principles of acceptance of tenders for normal works in both the branches of the Department are laid down in letters Nos. 1090A, dated the 1st April, 1939, and 14T/A., dated the 27th September, 1939. The orders in respect of urgent A.R.P., Civil Defence, Military and R.A.F. works placed in charge of the Communications and Buildings Branch from time to time since January, 1942, are laid down in memorandum No. 87A, dated the 13th January, 1942, and No. 72A, dated the 8th January, 1943. Copies of the four letters are laid on the Library Table.

(*ii*) and (*b*) Rs.1,21,854-4 and 13·06 per cent. in the Irrigation Branch. The Communications and Buildings Branch figure will be collected in April, 1943, i.e., after the special orders have operated for one clear financial year.

(*c*) I have already taken up the matter which is still under consideration. I have passed orders to departments to expedite the matter.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: As the Hon'ble Minister has stated that the figures are not yet ready and he will get the figures in March next, instead of giving a fresh notice, will the Hon'ble Minister consider the question as held over till he can give the exact figures?

The Hon'ble Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: It is much better to give fresh notice. The experiment will be from January, 1942, and unless one year goes, it is not possible to get it.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: We accept that, but the Hon'ble Minister could have given us the figures for the previous financial year.

The Hon'ble Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: You have not asked for that.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Sir, the question refers to the amount of money drawn and the percentage of contracts obtained by the Muslim contractors during 1941-42. The answer is there, but here the proportion, that is, the amounts of money obtained by contractors of different communities are not mentioned.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please put a straight question.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is in a position just now to tell the House the exact amounts drawn by contractors of different communities?

The Hon'ble Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: As I have explained, we have got the figure for the Irrigation Branch in 1942 when the order was passed. Previously, there was a list of approved contractors and during this emergency that order has been reversed. Now, it is done not exactly by tenders but from a list of contractors—not selected on the communal basis—but the Superintending Engineer selects the best men out of this list

and therefore many Muslim contractors as well as members of other communities get contracts. You cannot get the whole list unless the whole work of 1942 is done which is done up to 1943.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any Muhammadan contractor had worked in the Communications Department?

The Hon'ble Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: Yes.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what was the amount taken by that contractor from the 1st April, 1941, to the 31st March, 1942?

The Hon'ble Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: I have already taken up the matter. I have passed orders to expedite the matter. I will give the figures later on.

Babu KSHETRA NATH SINGHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to let us know whether, in collecting data about Muslims and non-Muslims, the case of the Scheduled Castes has been completely ignored and lost sight of?

The Hon'ble Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: No; I have not lost sight of that.

Arrangement for waiting room outside Intelligence Branch headquarters, Calcutta.

***49. Sreejut ASHUTOSH MALLICK:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the parents and relatives (among whom there are ladies) of persons arrested have to wait outside on the street for long hours before they are allowed inside the compound when they go to the Criminal Investigation Department, Intelligence Branch headquarters at Lord Sinha Road, for information?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of—

(*i*) making some arrangement for a waiting room outside; and

(*ii*) putting some officer-in-charge who can reply to the enquiries made?

MINISTER in charge of the HOME DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq): (*a*) Visitors to the Intelligence Branch have sometimes to wait outside for short periods whilst the nature of their business is examined. Every endeavour is made to avoid keeping them waiting unnecessarily.

(*b*) (*i*) I regret that it is not possible to consider such an arrangement.

(*ii*) No single officer could be expected to reply offhand to queries made at the gate.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is meant by "short periods" referred to in answer (*a*)? What is the maximum amount of that? I want to know the nature and extent of the period.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The period is not uniform. It may be half an hour, it may be ten minutes, or it may be two hours. What is a short period and what is a long period is a matter of opinion. If there are specific cases in which people have been made to wait for an unnecessarily long period and if particulars are given, I shall be obliged, so that I may make an enquiry.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister tell the House what are the difficulties in getting a room with sitting accommodation for these visitors?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I know that there is not enough accommodation and it is not possible also to extend the building, because the lands round about belong to the Calcutta Corporation and they are not willing to surrender those lands.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: With reference to answer (*a*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he will say that I am wrong if I suggest that the visitors have to wait for seven or eight hours?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I cannot contradict the honourable member. I have no information. It may be so. But if such instances are brought to my notice or particulars are given, I promise to make an enquiry.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister please tell this House whether Government will make some arrangements for purchasing land even from the Corporation for making a waiting-room because the prisoners whom the visitors go to interview are detained without trial? Will Government make some arrangement?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I shall be obliged if the honourable member were to discuss this question with me in my office. I shall see whether anything can be done.

Persons dealt with in Bengal under the Defence of India Act and Rules.

***50. Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Home Minister be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing, district by district, how many persons have been since August 7, 1942,—

(*i*) arrested under the Defence of India Act and Rules;

(*ii*) detained under the Defence of India Rules (*a*) 129 and (*b*) 26; and

(*iii*) convicted under the Defence of India Act and Rules?

(*b*) Is it a fact that many persons detained in pre-reform days under Regulation III of 1818 have been arrested and detained under the Defence of India Act as security prisoners without any reference to their present political activities?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what are the offences that each one of such detained persons committed or intended to commit?

(*d*) Is it a fact that persons convicted and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment before 1935 are being arrested and detained as security prisoners immediately on the expiry of their terms of sentences without waiting to see how they conduct themselves after release?

(*e*) Is it a fact that a large number of persons and even members of the Legislature have been detained without any evidence of subversive activities on their part?

(*f*) If the answer to (*e*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what are the offences that each one of the detained M.L.As. committed or intended to commit?

(*g*) Is the Hon'ble Minister aware—

(*i*) that there exists a feeling in the public mind that the cases of persons arrested under the Defence of India Act and Rules are not placed before the Hon'ble Minister immediately after their arrest; and

(*ii*) that for the delay the persons detained under Rule 129 find themselves converted into long term security prisoners under Rule 26?

(*h*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps, if any, he proposes taking to prevent such uses of Defence of India Act and Rules as are referred to in (*b*), (*c*) and (*d*) and ensure expeditious examination of the cases of persons detained under Rule 129.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) A statement is laid on the Library Table.

(*b*) No

(*c*) and (*e*) I refer the honourable member to Defence of India Rule 26. In the case of persons detained information has been laid before Government satisfying them that an order of detention is necessary to secure the objects indicated in the Rule.

(*d*) Yes, in some cases.

(*f*) Does not arise in view of my reply to (*c*) and (*e*). Detention is ordered, as the honourable member will see as a precautionary measure and not necessarily to prevent the commission of a definite offence.

(*g*) (*i*) and (*ii*) Delays are in fact inevitable but the cases are submitted to me in accordance with my orders as soon as possible. We have adopted the device of issuing orders under Defence Rule 26 pending scrutiny of the information submitted to us because this ensures to those who are under

detention the rather more favourable concessions allowed to security prisoners, the absence of which was in some cases made a matter for protest or complaint by or on behalf of those arrested.

(*b*) As I have already indicated, detention is in each case ordered with reference to the present security position and the ascertained activities or intentions of the persons detained. Although delays occur in disposing of the cases and are regretted they are inevitable and every effort is made to reduce them to the minimum.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state with reference to the statement referred to which of the two statements are meant to give the answer to the question—table No. A or table No. B? The Hon'ble Minister has said that a statement is laid on the library table. Now there are two statements on the library table—tables A and B. I want to know which of the two statements is meant.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I confess I have not seen these tables.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if his attention has been drawn to the fact that in table No. A there are more than 1,019 persons arrested and detained under section 129 of the Defence of India Rules, 1,210 persons detained under the Defence of India Rule 26 and 1,599 persons convicted under the Defence of India Rules? I have done the additions subject to correction. Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state with reference to these tables whether in the case of 1,210 persons detained under the Defence of India Rule 26 the attention of the Minister in charge has been drawn with regard to each one of them before actual detention is ordered?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Action under section 26 refers to security prisoners other than the special security prisoners. Ordinarily when a person is arrested under section 129 he is not entitled to certain privileges to which he will be entitled otherwise.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: No, no. That also is given in the printed answer. My question is this. I find from the list that more than 1,200 persons have been kept under detention under the Defence of India Rule 26, up to the end of December, 1942. There may have been some release later on. Now, Sir, the Defence of India Rules provide that in the case of subsequent detention under section 26 the sanction of the Local Government will have to be taken and in the case of section 129 certain authority has been vested in local officers. We presume that the sanction of the Local Government in this case means the approval of the Hon'ble Minister in charge. So my question is whether in the case of these 1,210 persons the approval of the Minister in charge has been taken or not.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: It is not possible for me to say that. All that I can say is this, that cases are put up and as a matter of routine the order under section 129 is converted into one under rule 26,

unless there are special reasons why a recommendation should be made for their release. But as regards these 1,200 persons as to how many cases were held back and how many were put up, I have got no idea.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: May I enquire if the detention of persons under rule 26 whose cases have not been definitely referred to the Local Government have been illegally detained?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Cases may have occurred in which persons arrested under section 129 have been detained although no order has been passed.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether in the case of members of this Legislature who were arrested at first under section 129 and subsequently detained under rule 26 each and everyone of these cases came up to the notice of the Minister in charge and his approval taken thereon?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: As regards members of the Legislature, we have laid it down that they should as a matter of course be brought to the notice of Government before they are detained under rule 26. In some cases the order of arrest under section 129 has been converted into detention under rule 26 under my orders. In some cases I have not approved, but as is well known the matter is one which is the Governor's special responsibility.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether in the case of Babu Suresh Chandra Majumdar, Babu Satya Priya Banerjee and Babu Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal the detentions have been in accordance with the legal provisions of rule 26, viz., that they have been with the approval and consent of the Hon'ble Minister in charge?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I know these cases and I am not certain if I am permitted to disclose the advice that I have tendered.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: It is not a question of advice at all. We are now functioning within what they call a complete provincial autonomy and, Sir, the Home Department is entirely under the care of the Hon'ble Chief Minister. I would like to know whether in each of these three cases his consent and approval were taken. What actually ultimately happened we have seen. I am not seeking information on that.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Dr. Sanyal, what is your question?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether in these three cases his consent was taken?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I know these cases. You are asking me to disclose what orders I passed, and what order was subsequently passed and by whom?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I only want to know whether the Hon'ble Chief Minister's consent was taken. Let him say "yes" or "no".

Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: We want a proper answer. Sir, it is a question of ministerial responsibility, and I know it is not a question of discretion.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sir Nazimuddin, do you want an answer?

Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Yes.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: As the Hon'ble Leader of the Opposition knows, the advice tendered by a Minister cannot be disclosed.

Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I don't agree with him.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: As I have said, I know what has happened in these cases.

Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Here the question is a constitutional one and absolutely clear. Either the Hon'ble Minister accepts responsibility for the orders passed or he does not accept the responsibility. Under the constitution, he can do both. I don't deny. He can accept the responsibility or he can deny the responsibility for the order. The question is: Does the Hon'ble Minister accept the responsibility?

Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: Sir, is the Hon'ble Leader of the Opposition entitled to make a speech in putting a supplementary question?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order. Dr. Sanyal, what is your question?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether his consent was given to the detention of these three persons under rule 26?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: It is not a question of consent. As regards the point raised by Dr. Sanyal and Sir Nazimuddin, the position is this. Ordinarily when a man is arrested under rule 129, the case must come to me at some stage. Now if I agree that the order under rule 129 should be converted into one under section 26, no difficulty arises. But in some cases I am of opinion that detention is not justified and in those cases it becomes Governor's responsibility, and I am not permitted to disclose in which case I tendered what advice.

Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state under what section or under what rule he is not permitted to disclose?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: He says that he is not in a position to disclose what advice he has tendered. I cannot help you in the matter.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: The question is pertinent. The Hon'ble Leader of the Opposition enquires under what section of the Government of India Act or of the rules made thereunder the Hon'ble Minister says that he is debarred?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The advice tendered to the Governor cannot be disclosed. It is privileged. I tendered the advice that

the men should not be——(Laughter.) It is not a question of laughter. There are three classes of cases. There is a class of cases in which it is entirely in the ministerial field. There the Governor is bound under the Instrument of Instructions to accept the advice, which is mandatory. Then there is the Governor's individual judgment in which the Governor can ask for advice but need not accept that advice. Then there is the special responsibility in which the Governor need not even ask for advice. Now, in these cases, it may be that when a case comes up I am of a particular opinion, but it may be that that opinion is not accepted by the Governor. Whether I have given that advice or not, what is the advice I have given, etc., are matters which are privileged and I cannot disclose them to the House.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: One hour is almost over. I cannot permit any more questions.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: It is a question which involves the rights and liberties of the people as a whole.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: In that case then I will read the rules and see how the position stands. I am prepared to look into the question once again to see how far within the rights that I possess I can disclose the information asked for in this House. I will reconsider the matter. But I think that this is the position which I can legitimately take up. If I am wrong I am willing to look into the whole matter. Unless I am convinced myself that I can do so under the constitution I am afraid I cannot give more information than I have given. I am however prepared to reconsider the matter. If I am wrong I will give the information as much as I can, but I must act within the constitution.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: In that case the question may be held over.

Realisation of education cess in Noakhali.

***51. Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department aware—

(*i*) that the education cess is being realised by Garnishee Proceedings in the district of Noakhali;

(*ii*) that rents due to the Talukdars and Zemindars from the tenants and the road cesses are also being claimed and realised along with the education cesses by the Garnishee Proceedings;

(*iii*) that for realisation of education cess and rents and the road cesses by Garnishee Proceeding certificates are filed and movables of the tenants are attached and sold in this district in contravention of section 168A of the Bengal Tenancy (Amendment) Act, 1940; and

(*iv*) that such Garnishee Proceedings are causing hardship to the tenants?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state from January, 1942, up to date—

(*i*) the number of the certificates filed in respect of such Garnishee Proceedings in the Certificate Court of Noakhali; and

(*ii*) the number that are now pending in the said Court?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: (*a*) (*i*) and (*ii*) Yes.

(*iii*) Attention of the local officers has been drawn to the legal position that in view of the provisions of section 168A of the Bengal Tenancy Act, it is not permissible to attach and put to sale the movables of tenants under the Garnishee procedure.

(*iv*) The instructions that have already been issued will remove the hardships of the tenants, if any.

(*b*) (*i*) 664 and (*ii*) 567.

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when the instructions were issued to local officers which will remove the hardships of the tenants?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I have not got the date here, but if the honourable member requires the information I can supply him with it later on.

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: Was it after the questions were received?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I am not sure. May be.

Khan Sahib Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMED: With reference to answer (*a*) (*iii*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the attention of all local officers throughout the province has been drawn to the legal position that it is not permissible to them to issue these certificates?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I have already given the answer.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether these instructions were issued to all the districts or only some of the districts?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I believe, to all the districts. But I can make an enquiry if the honourable member so desires.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state approximately the number of cases in which certificates have been filed and movables of the tenants have been attached in the district of Noakhali in contravention of section 168A of the Bengal Tenancy (Amendment) Act, 1940?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: The information is not here with me, but if my honourable friend so desires I will supply him with the information later on.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: In view of the reply given by the Hon'ble Minister that he is not sure whether instructions have been issued

to all the District Officers, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is considering the desirability of issuing a circular to all officers of Government in the province clarifying the position that the movables of the tenants are not attachable?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Strictly speaking the question put by my honourable friend does not arise out of this. But as the suggestion which he has made is a very reasonable one, I will consider the desirability of issuing a circular clarifying the position if not already issued.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Questions over.

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Present Condition of Mahatma Gandhi.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, before the other business of the day is taken up, I should like to know if Government is in a position to let us have the latest information about the present condition of health of Mahatma Gandhi as a result of his fast. It is rumoured that the condition of Gandhiji has turned out to be very grave now, and we want to have this information in order to decide as to how to conduct ourselves. Therefore we would request the Government to tell us if they have the latest information about Gandhiji's health.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have no official information

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: We want to have official information, if any, from the Hon'ble the Chief Minister who is standing over there

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Fazlul Huq, an enquiry has been made by Dr. Sanyal as to whether you have any official information with regard to the present condition of health of Mahatma Gandhi.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: We have no official information.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: May I rise to a point of order. I should like to know from you, Sir, as to whether the request made by the honourable member from Murshidabad is within the purview of this House——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Nonsense! The honourable member ought not to have intervened, knowing something, as he does, about Mahatma Gandhi's position.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: I think, Sir, the expression just used by the honourable member against me is unparliamentary.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Dr. Sanyal, the expression you have used is wholly unparliamentary.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: When I used that expression, I was referring to the honourable member's intervention and not to him personally, and I am perfectly entitled to do so.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Sir, my point is whether the honourable member was right in making the request he has made and whether it is right and proper for the Chair to call upon the Chief Minister to answer that question.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think Dr. Sanyal was perfectly entitled to make this enquiry because it is an all-India affair and therefore I have asked the Hon'ble the Chief Minister to make his position clear.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: As I have already said, Sir, we have no official information, but we heard certain rumours in the lobby.

NON-OFFICIAL BILLS

The Bengal Land Revenue Sales (Amendment) Bill, 1941, by Khan Bahadur Saiyed Muazzamuddin Hosain, M.L.C., as passed by the Bengal Legislative Council.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: May I suggest that there are lots of notices of Bills standing from 1941 and consequently our files are very heavy. If the House agree, I propose to proceed with the Bills of Mr. Israil and Dr. Sanyal later on and in the meantime we can finish with the other motions for introduction of Bills.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Sir, I will not take up much time of the House in placing my motions before the House and therefore if you permit me, I propose to move my motions in the order in which they are on the agenda paper.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: All right.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Sir, I beg to move that the Bengal Land Revenue Sales (Amendment) Bill, 1941, as passed by the Council, be continued under the proviso to rule 19 (2) of the Bengal Legislative Assembly Procedure Rules.

The motion was put and agreed to.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Sir, I beg also to move that the Bengal Land Revenue Sales (Amendment) Bill, 1941, as passed by the Council, be taken into consideration.

In moving this motion, Sir, I beg to point out that so far as this Bill is concerned, it is a very short Bill containing only three clauses. In the case of revenue sales there is no provision for serving any notice by registered post. Section 6 lays down that only a notification should be fixed up in the office of the Collector as well as in that of the District Judge, so the landlords concerned or their people have no chance of knowing whether their estates are being put up for sale; and this Bill seeks to remove this defect by insisting that registered notices should be served upon the recorded proprietors of estates to be put up for sale and if their number be more than five, only upon the five biggest co-sharers and that provision should also be made to realise the cost of such notices——

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Israil, I think there is not much to be said in connection with these simple motions.

The motion of Maulvi Muhammad Israil that the Bengal Land Revenue Sales (Amendment) Bill, 1941, as passed by the Council, be taken into consideration, was then put and agreed to.

Clauses 1 to 3.

The question that clauses 1, 2 and 3 stand part of the Bill was then put and agreed to.

Preamble.

The question that the Preamble stand part of the Bill was put and agreed to.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: I beg to move that the Bengal Land Revenue Sales (Amendment) Bill, 1941, as settled in the Assembly, be passed.

The motion was put and agreed to.

(The House was then adjourned for fifteen minutes.)

(After adjournment.)

The Bengal Local Self-Government (Amendment) Bill, 1941, by Khan Bahadur Ataur Rahman, M.L.C., as passed by the Bengal Legislative Council.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the Bengal Local Self-Government (Amendment) Bill, 1941, as passed by the Council, be taken into consideration.

Sir, this Bill is a simple one. It seeks to remove the words "with the consent of the District Board" from section 36A of the Bengal Local Self-Government Act of 1936, thereby seeking to enable Government to abolish Local Boards in case Government finds it necessary even without reference to or without obtaining the consent of the District Board. I hope this Bill will be accepted by the House unanimously as it has already been passed by the Council and has been there for a long time.

The motion of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal that the Bengal Local Self-Government (Amendment) Bill, 1941, as passed by the Council, be taken into consideration was then put and agreed to.

Clauses 1 and 2.

The question that clauses 1 and 2 stand part of the Bill was put and agreed to.

Preamble.

The question that the preamble stand part of the Bill was put and agreed to.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I beg to move that the Bengal Local Self-Government (Amendment) Bill, 1941, as settled in the Assembly, be passed.

The motion was put and agreed to.

The Bengal Fisheries Bill, 1940.

Mr. AMRITA LAL MANDAL: Sir, I beg to move that the Bengal Fisheries Bill, 1940, be referred to a Select Committee consisting of—

(1) the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department,
(2) Mr. Upendra Nath Edbar,
(3) Mr. Syed Hasanali Chaudhury,
(4) Mr. Monomohan Das,
(5) Mr. Mirza Abdul Hafiz,
(6) Mr. Charu Chandra Roy,
(7) Mr. Surendra Nath Biswas,
(8) Maulvi Muhammad Israil,
(9) Mrs. Hemaprova Majumdar, and
(10) Mr. Amrita Lal Mandal (the mover),

with instructions to submit their report by June 30, 1943, the number of members forming the quorum being five

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA KUMAR: Sir, I beg to move by way of amendment that after the name of Mr. Amrita Lal Mandal the following names be added:—

(1) Mr. J. R. Walker,
(2) Mr. Shahedali,
(3) Mr. Dhananjoy Roy,
(4) Rai Bahadur Jogesh Chandra Sen,
(5) Maulvi Kazi Abul Masud,
(6) Mr. Atul Chandra Sen, and
(7) Haji Safiruddin Ahmed

Mr. CHAIRMAN (Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin): I propose that these two Bills—the Bengal Fisheries Bill, 1940, and the Bengal Medical (Amendment) Bill, 1937—be taken up when the Deputy Speaker is in the Chair. For the time being I suggest that the Bengal Hindu Widows' Remarriage Propagation Bill, 1940, be taken up now, and I call upon Mr. Monomohan Das to move this motion.

The Bengal Hindu Widows' Remarriage Propagation Bill, 1940.

Mr. MONOMOHAN DAS: Sir, I beg to move that the Bengal Hindu Widows' Remarriage Propagation Bill, 1940, be continued under the proviso to rule 19 (2) of the Bengal Legislative Assembly Procedure Rules.

The motion was put and agreed to.

Mr. MONMOHAN DAS: Sir, I also beg to move that the said Bill be referred to a Select Committee consisting of:—

(1) the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Judicial Department,
(2) Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee,
(3) Mrs. Hemprova Mazumdar,
(4) Mr. Atul Chandra Kumar,
(5) Mr. Charu Chandra Roy
(6) Mr. Surendra Nath Biswas,
(7) Rai Bahadur Jogesh Chandra Sen
(8) Srijut Narendra Nath Das Gupta,
(9) Mr. Dhananjay Roy,
(10) Mr. Giasuddin Ahmed,
(11) Maulvi Abdul Hamid Shah,
(12) Maulvi Abdul Wahed
(13) Mr Shahedali,
(14) Mr. Banku Behari Mandal, and
(15) Mr Monmohan Das (the mover),

with instructions to submit their report by July 15, 1943, the number of members forming the quorum being five.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, I beg to move by way of amendment that the Bill be recirculated for the purpose of eliciting further opinion thereon by the 31st December, 1943.

Sir, the Bill raises a question of vital importance, namely, whether or not social legislation should be pushed to the extreme, on which legislators may have given their opinion. But, Sir, if you go through the Statement of Objects and Reasons, you will find that one of the suggestions made by my honourable friend is that Hindu widows be permitted only to remarry Hindu widowers and *vice versa*, and on that point legal opinion all the world over has ended in a demur. Whether the Hindu society is in favour of the acceptance of this proposal, namely, that widows alone will be eligible—not eligible—but will only remarry widowers and *vice versa*,—that is a question that has to be considered. I am suggesting, therefore, that further public opinion may be invited with reference to the very important question raised in the Bill. I myself am not against the remarriage of widows. The matter has been sanctified ever since 1856. (Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: You do not want to limit their choice.) It will be very difficult to limit their choice until you impose compulsion in the matter of marriage. You may impose compulsion in other matters, but in regard to marriage it is very difficult to impose compulsion. (A VOICE FROM THE PROGRESSIVE COALITION PARTY: The Defence of India Rules are there.) The Defence of India Rules do not apply to a social legislation of this type and therefore, Sir, I am moving by way of amendment that this measure be recirculated for the purpose of eliciting public opinion thereon by the 31st December, 1943.

The motion of the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee that the Bill be recirculated for the purpose of eliciting further opinion thereon by the 31st December, 1943, was then put and agreed to.

The State Provisions Bill for Maternity and Child Welfare Clinics, 1941.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Sir, I beg to move that the State Provisions Bill for Maternity and Child Welfare Clinics, 1941, be continued under the proviso to rule 19 (2) of the Bengal Legislative Assembly Procedure Rules.

The motion was then put and agreed to.

The Bengal Rent Reduction (Temporary Provisions) Bill, 1940.

Maulvi ABDUL HAKIM (Mymensingh): Sir, I beg to move that the Bengal Rent Reduction (Temporary Provisions) Bill, 1940, be referred to a Select Committee consisting of:—

(1) the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department,
(2) Mr. G. Morgan, C.I.E.,
(3) Mr. Rasik Lal Biswas,
(4) Mr. Shahedali,
(5) Mr. Atul Chandra Kumar,
(6) Maulvi Abdul Hamid Shah,
(7) Maulvi Rajibuddin Tarafdar,
(8) Maulvi Idris Ahmed Mia,
(9) Maulvi Muhammad Israil,
(10) Maulvi Abdul Latif Biswas,
(11) Mr. Ahmed Hossain,
(12) Khan Bahadur Muhammad Anwarul Azim,
(13) Khan Bahadur Maulvi Jalaluddin Ahmad,
(14) Maulvi Abdur Razzak,
(15) Khan Saheb Maulvi Md Hasanuzzaman,
(16) Mr. Maqbul Hosain, and
(17) Maulvi Abdul Hakim (the mover),

with instructions to submit their report by October 31, 1944, the number of members forming the quorum being five.

এই বিলের (খসড়ার) প্রয়োজনীয়তা দিবালোকের ন্যায় স্পষ্ট। এ সম্বন্ধে বেশী বক্তৃতা করবার প্রয়োজন নাই। এই বিলটি আর একবার ১৯৪১ সালের ২৮শে ফেব্রুয়ারী তারিখে সিলেক্ট কমিটিতে দিবার জন্য প্রস্তাব করা হইয়াছিল। তখন আমি লম্বা চওড়া বক্তৃতা করিয়া এই বিলের প্রয়োজনীয়তা বুঝাইয়া দিয়াছিলাম। আজ আমি শুধু এই বিলের দফাবারী কয়েকটি ধারা সম্বন্ধে কিছু বলতে চাই। বাংলাদেশে যে খাজনার নিরিখ অত্যন্ত বেশী তাহা লাওবেভিনিউ কমিশনের রিপোর্ট পাঠেও জানা যায়। খান বাহাদুর সৈয়দ মোয়াজ্জেমউদ্দিন হুসেন এই কমিশনের একজন বিখ্যাত মেম্বর ছিলেন। তিনি রিপোর্টের মধ্যে তাহার যে পৃথক মন্তব্য লিপিবদ্ধ করিয়াছেন তাহা পাঠ করিলেও জানা যায় যে বাংলাদেশে খাজনার গড়-পড়তা নিরিখ অস্বাভাবিকরূপে বাড়িয়া গিয়াছে। এই প্রদেশে অত্যধিক খাজনা কি কি কারণে হ্রাস করা উচিত তাহা নিম্নে উল্লেখ করিলাম।

From a note of dissent struck by a prominent member of the Commission, it is found that the average rate of rent in Bengal has increased by nearly 160 per cent. since the time of granting permanent settlement. Moreover, no zemindar has up till now done any work of agricultural improvement worth the name. The Commission has also found that the yield of rice in Bengal is low in comparison with other provinces and countries. From the Commission's enquiry it also transpires that the average revenue per acre is surprisingly low in the major portion of the permanently-settled areas in this province. This average revenue per acre varies from 6 pies to 15 annas 9 pies only, in 22 districts and rises up to 1 rupee 14 annas 7 pies only, in the remaining few districts. Cultivators of Bengal are also hopelessly indebted. Besides, they have no subsidiary occupation. Considering all these facts, the high rents of Bengal should be reduced to the paying capacity of the cultivators.

আমি নিজেও বেংট এনকুয়ারি কমিটির মেম্বার হিসাবে কতিপয় জেলায় ভ্রমণ করিয়া দেখিয়াছি যে খাজনার নিবিখ অত্যন্ত বেশী। বাখরগঞ্জ জেলায় দেখিয়াছি ধানা করারীর খাজনার হার গড়পড়তা এবার প্রতি ২৫।৩০ টাকা। অথচ সেখানে সদর খাজনার হার গড়পড়তা একর প্রতি ।৶০ আনার বেশী নয়। আমি হাওড়া জেলার আমতা সাবডিভিসনে গিয়াছিলাম সেখানে প্রতি একরে সদর খাজনার গড়পড়তা রেট ১৸৶৭ পাই কিন্তু প্রজার খাজনার রেট ১৫৲ পর্য্যন্ত উঠিয়াছে। তারপর আমি পরগণা এবং মহাল সম্বন্ধেও সদর খাজনা এবং প্রজার খাজনার আকাশ পাতাল বেশ কম সম্বন্ধে কিছু বলতে চাই। আমার নিজের পরগণা আলাসিংহের মোট সদর খাজনার পরিমাণ নূনাধিক ৭২ হাজার টাকা আর জমিদারগণ প্রজাদিগের নিকট হইতে আদায় করেন নূনাধিক ২৫ লক্ষ টাকা অর্থাৎ সদর খাজনার প্রায় ২৫ গুণ বেশী। বাখরগঞ্জ জেলার আইলামিরাখালী নামে একটি মহালের সদর খাজনা এবং প্রজার খাজনা সম্বন্ধে আমি গভর্ণমেণ্টকে প্রশ্ন করেছিলাম। তাহার উত্তরে জানিতে পারিলাম যে ঐ মহালের সদর খাজনা ১৭২৷৮ পাই কিন্তু প্রজার খাজনা সোওয়া লক্ষ টাকার উপর। অর্থাৎ প্রজার খাজনা সদর খাজনা অপেক্ষা ৩ শত গুণেরও অধিক। এ সম্বন্ধে বলিতে গেলে অনেক সময়ের দরকার। যাহা হউক এই কয়েকটি দৃষ্টান্ত হইতে নিশ্চয়ই আপনারা বুঝিতে পারিয়াছেন যে প্রজার খাজনা কমান উচিত।

এইবার আমি বিলের ধারাগুলি সম্বন্ধে দু একটা কথা বলতে চাই। এই বিলের ৩ নং ধারাই প্রধান ধারা। এই ধারায় বলা হইয়াছে যে বাংলাদেশে প্রজার খাজনা প্রতি একরে ৩৲ টাকার বেশী হইতে পারিবে না। সদর খাজনা সব চেয়ে কম বাংলাদেশের দার্জিলিং জেলায় একর প্রতি মাত্র দুই পয়সা। অথচ সেখানকার প্রজার খাজনা গড়পড়তা একর প্রতি ৭।৮ টাকা কিম্বা তাহারও বেশী বলিয়া জানিতে পারিয়াছি। ৩ নং ধারার উপধারায় আমি বলিয়াছি যেখানে সদর খাজনার রেট দুই টাকা বা তাহার অধিক সেখানে প্রজার খাজনার রেট সদর খাজনার দেড় গুণের অধিক হওয়া উচিত নহে। এই যে কথাটা বলিয়াছি ইহা কোন নূতন কথা নহে কারণ বর্দ্ধমানের মহারাজাধিরাজ প্রভৃতি অনেক জমিদার আছেন যাঁহারা সদর খাজনার দেড়গুণের অধিক তাহাদের রাইয়তের নিকট হইতে আদায় করেন না।

৪ নং ধারায় বলা হইয়াছে যে কোন রাইয়ত তাহার অধীনস্থ কোর্ফা রাইয়তের নিকট হইতে শতকরা ৫০৲ পঞ্চাশ টাকা অর্থাৎ টাকায় আট আনার বেশী মুনাফা আদায় করিতে পারিবে না। আর যদি একাধিক গ্রেডের কোর্ফা প্রজা থাকে তাহা হইলে একজন আর একজনের নিকট হইতে আরও কম মুনাফা আদায় করিবেন।

৬ নং ধারায় বলা হইয়াছে যে রাইয়তের খাজনা কমিয়া গেলে তালুকদার প্রভৃতি মধ্য সত্বাধিকারীদের দেয় খাজনাও সেই অনুপাতে কমিয়া যাইবে।

৮ নং ধারায় বলা হইয়াছে যে মহালে রাইয়তের খাজনার নিরিখ প্রতি একরে ১৲ টাকার কম জমিদারী প্রথা উচ্ছেদ না হওয়া পর্য্যন্ত সেই মহাল সেই নিরিখই বহাল থাকিবে। কারণ ঐ মহালের মালিক গভর্ণমেণ্টকে যে সদর খাজনা দিয়া থাকেন তাহা অপেক্ষা যথেষ্ট পরিমাণ বেশী খাজনা এই মহালের প্রজাদের নিকট হইতে তিনি আদায় করিয়া থাকেন।

৯ নং ধারায় বলা হইয়াছে যে কায়েম মকররী খাজনায় এই আইন প্রয়োগ করা হইবে না। কারণ কায়েম মকররী খাজনার পরিমাণ খুব বেশী নহে।

আমার বিলটিকে temporary (সাময়িক) বলিয়াছি এই জন্য যে জমিদারী প্রথা তুলিয়া দিতে অনেক দিন সময় লাগিবে। ততদিন পর্য্যন্ত যদি প্রজার অত্যধিক খাজনার নিরিখ হ্রাস করা না যায় তাহলে প্রজার জমি বাড়ী কিছুই থাকিবে না। সমস্তই নিলাম হইয়া যাইবে। কাজেই যতদিন জমিদারী প্রথা না উঠাইয়া দেওয়া হয় ততদিন এই মধ্যবর্ত্তী সময়ের জন্য এই আইনটি বলবৎ থাকিবে। আর জমিদারী প্রথা উঠিয়া যাইবার পর বাংলাদেশে আবার নূতন করিয়া সারভে সেটেলমেণ্ট করিতে হইবে। জমির উর্ব্বরা শক্তি বিবেচনা করিয়া জমির শ্রেণীবিভাগ করিতে হইবে এবং এক এক রকম জমির জন্য এক এক রকম খাজনার হার সাব্যস্ত করিতে হইবে। যখন এইরূপ আর একটি আইন করা হইবে তখন আমার এই আইনটি অচল হইয়া যাইবে। মিউনিসিপ্যালিটিতে বা চাঙ্গিনা ভিলিতে যে সকল প্রজা বাস করে তাহাদের জমিতে কোন সত্ব নাই। বিংশ শতাব্দীর এই সভ্যতার যুগেও তাহারা মালিকের স্বেচ্ছাধীন প্রজা অর্থাৎ ওয়ালা হইয়া বাস করিতেছে। তাহাদের স্বার্থরক্ষার জন্য যেরূপ একটি temporary (সাময়িক) আইন করা হইয়াছে,—চিরস্থায়ী বন্দোবস্ত যে পর্য্যন্ত না উঠিয়া যায় সেই পর্য্যন্ত চাষী প্রজাদের অত্যধিক খাজনার নিরিখ হ্রাস করিবার জন্য আমার এই বিলটিকেও সেইরূপ temporary (সাময়িক) বলা হইয়াছে।

আমার এই বিলে যে নিরিখের কথা উল্লেখ করিয়াছি তাহাতে অনেক জমিদারের কোন ক্ষতি হইবে না। হুগলী, হাওড়া, বাখরগঞ্জ, ময়মনসিংহ, চব্বিশ পরগণা প্রভৃতি যেসব জেলায় স্থানে স্থানে জমিদারগণ জুলুম করিয়া খাজনা একান্ত বাড়াইয়া ফেলিয়াছে কেবলমাত্র সেই সেই স্থানে অত্যধিক খাজনার নিরিখ কমিয়া পড়িবে। মোটের উপর যে যে মহলে খাজনার নিরিখ তিন টাকা বা তাহার কম আমার এই আইনটি সেসব মহলের মালিকগণকে স্পর্শ করিবে না। আমি এই বিলের ৩ নং ধারায় যে ১৲ নিরিখের কথা বলিয়াছি তাহা যদি আইন সভার অধিকাংশ মেম্বরগণ কিছু কম বলিয়া মনে করেন তবে সংশোধনী প্রস্তাব দ্বারা তাহা ৪৲ করিয়া লইতে পারেন। বেণ্ট এনকুয়ারি কমিটির তদন্ত শেষ হইয়াছে ১৯৪১ সালের ১১ই জানুয়ারী কিন্তু এ পর্য্যন্ত রিপোর্ট বাহির করা হয় নাই। এই রিপোর্ট বাহির হইলে মেম্বরদের বুঝিবার পক্ষে অনেক সুবিধা হইতে পারে। উপসংহারে আমি বলি যে আমার এই বিলটি সিলেক্ট কমিটিতে যাইতে কাহারও আপত্তি থাকিতে পারে না। আশা করি আপনারা সকলেই আমার প্রস্তাব সমর্থন করিবেন।

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, may I have a little time of five minutes to move my amendment? I want this little time to consider whether or not this Bill will go before the Select Committee.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: All right. In the meantime any other member may speak.

Maulvi ABDUL WAHED: মৌলবী আবদুল হাকিম সাহেব প্রজার খাজনা সাময়িকভাবে কমান জন্য যে বিল উপস্থাপিত কোরেছেন তা সমর্থন কোরতে আমি দাঁড়িয়েছি। এ সম্বন্ধে তিনি আগেও বলেছিলেন, আজও বলেছেন, আমিও বলেছি। চাষী প্রজার যে খাজনা কমান উচিত এ সম্বন্ধে কোন দ্বিমত নাই, গত নির্ব্বাচনে যাঁরা প্রজার ভোটে নির্ব্বাচিত হয়েছেন তাঁরা প্রত্যেকেই ওয়াদা করেছিলেন যে প্রজার খাজনা কমান হবে। সেই কমানর জন্য প্রজার খাজনা বেশী কি না তার তদন্ত করান হয়েছে। এবং তাঁরা রিপোর্টও দিয়েছেন। তা ছাড়া জমিদারী প্রথার উচ্ছেদের জন্য যে কমিশন বসান হয়েছিল তাঁরাও রিপোর্ট দিয়েছেন এবং তাহারা জমিদারী প্রথা তুলে দেবার সপক্ষেই রিপোর্ট দিয়েছেন। কিন্তু সেই জমিদারী প্রথা উঠে যাবার পূর্ব্ব মুহূর্ত্ত পর্য্যন্ত যদি প্রজার খাজনা কমান না হয় তা হ'লে প্রজার অবস্থা অত্যন্ত ক্ষুণ্ণ হবে। যেভাবে প্রজার খাজনা বেড়ে গেছে এবং প্রজার দুর্দ্দশা বেড়ে গেছে, তার ভিটা মাটী সমস্ত নিলামে চড়ে গিয়েছিল—অবশ্য কিছু রক্ষা হয়েছে সালিসী বোর্ড আইন দ্বারা কিন্তু অধুনা জিনিসপত্রের অত্যধিক মূল্য বৃদ্ধির দরুণ এবং ভূমির উৎপাদিকা শক্তি কমে যাবার দরুণ, প্রজার দিবার শক্তি সামর্থ্য কমে যাবার দরুণ তার দুরবস্থা উপস্থিত হয়েছে। সালিশী বোর্ডে ঋণের কিস্তী হয়েছে কিন্তু এখনও ঋণের এবং খাজনার জন্য সার্টিফিকেট, নোটিস ইত্যাদি দেওয়া হচ্চে। এ অবস্থা যদি থেকে যায় তাহলে চাষী প্রজা জমিদারী প্রথা উঠে যাবে এই আশায় বসে থাকলে বাঁচবে না, ততদিনে সমস্ত জমি খাস দখল হয়ে যাবে। কাজেই তার পরে জমিদারী প্রথা উঠে গেলেও চাষী প্রজার সঙ্গে জমির সঙ্গে কোন সম্বন্ধ থাকবে না। তখন জমিদারী প্রথা উঠে গেলেই বা কি আর না গেলেই বা কি। সে বহু দূরের কথা। তা হবার আগে প্রজার খাজনা কমান উচিত। আজ আইনের ভিতরে প্রতি একরে ৩৲ খাজনার ব্যবস্থা আছে। আমি বলতে চাই যে আরও কম হওয়া উচিত। তিনটী শ্রেণী কোরে জমিকে ভাগ কোরতে হবে; এক শ্রেণীতে হবে ২৲ টাকা, এক শ্রেণীতে হবে ২৷৷০ টাকা এবং এক শ্রেণীতে হবে ৩৲ টাকা। এর বেশী হ'তে পারবে না। তার কম যেখানে আছে তা আছেই। যেখানে বেশী আছে সেখানে এইভাবে ব্যবস্থা করা উচিত। তা যদি না করা হয় তাহলে চাষী প্রজারা দেশে থাকতে পারবে না। তাদের অচিরে ভূমিশূন্য হতে হবে। যদি চাষী প্রজারা ভূমিশূন্য হয়ে যায় তবে দেশে আপনা আপনি বিপ্লবের আগুন জ্বলে উঠবে। যে বিপ্লবকে একদিন ব্রিটিশ গভর্ণমেণ্ট ভয় ক'রতেন, যে বলশিয়ার বিপ্লবকে একদিন বড় ভয় ক'রতেন—যদিও আজকাল রুশিয়া ব্রিটিশ সরকারের মিত্র হয়েছে—কিন্তু সেই রুশিয়ার বিপ্লবকে তাঁরা একদিন বিশেষ ভয় ক'রতেন এবং সেই রুশিয়ার বিপ্লব এ দেশে দেখা দেবে এবং এদেশে কাটাকাটি মারামারি আরম্ভ হবে। এ দেশও আবার চাষী প্রজার হাতে যাবে; মধ্যস্বত্ব বোলে কোন জিনিস থাকবে না, উচ্চ স্বত্ব বোলে কোন জিনিস থাকবে না। কাজেই এই অবস্থায় দেশে শান্তি রক্ষার জন্য খাজনা কমান উচিত এবং এই বিল পাস হওয়া উচিত।

The motion of Maulvi Abdul Hakim that the Bengal Rent Reduction (Temporary Provisions) Bill, 1940, be referred to a Select Committee consisting of—

(1) the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department,
(2) Mr. G. Morgan, C.I.E.,
(3) Mr. Rasik Lal Biswas,

(4) Mr. Shahedali,
(5) Mr. Atul Chandra Kumar,
(6) Maulvi Abdul Hamid Shah,
(7) Maulvi Rajibuddin Tarafdar,
(8) Maulvi Idris Ahmed Mia,
(9) Maulvi Muhammad Israil,
(10) Maulvi Abdul Latif Biswas,
(11) Mr. Ahmed Hossain,
(12) Khan Bahadur Muhammad Anwarul Azim,
(13) Khan Bahadur Maulvi Jalaluddin Ahmad,
(14) Khan Saheb Maulvi Md. Hasanuzzaman,
(15) Mr. Maqbul Hosain,
(16) Maulvi Abdur Razzak, and
(17) Maulvi Abdul Hakim (the mover),

with instructions to submit their report by October 31, 1943, the number of members forming the quorum being five, was then put and agreed to

The Bengal Tenancy (Amendment) Bill, 1940.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Sir, I beg to move that the Bengal Tenancy (Amendment) Bill, 1940, be continued under the proviso to rule 19(2) of the Bengal Legislative Assembly Procedure Rules.

The motion was then put and agreed to

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: I beg also to move that the said Bill be referred to a Select Committee consisting of—

(1) the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department,
(2) Mr. Ahmed Hossain,
(3) Mr. Yusuf Ali Chowdhury,
(4) Mr. Maqbul Hossain,
(5) Maulvi Abdul Hakim (Mymensingh),
(6) Mr. Mirza Abdul Hafiz,
(7) Mr. Fazlur Rahman,
(8) Mr. Amrita Lal Mandal,
(9) Mr. Charu Chandra Roy,
(10) Mr. Atul Chandra Kumar, and
(11) Maulvi Muhammad Israil (the mover),

with instructions to submit their report by 30th June, 1943, the number of members forming the quorum being five.

Sir, I beg to submit that I could not obtain the consent of Maulvi Abdul Latif Biswas and Mr. Pulin Behary Mullick, so their names may be omitted from the list.

Sir, in moving this Bill I beg to submit before the House that the object of this Bill is to reduce rent permanently and thereby relief of a

permanent character is given to the tenants. It will be quite apparent from the Statement of Objects and Reasons of the Bill that I have given notice of the Bill after going through the recommendations of the Land Revenue Commission. Sir, the Bill has been based on the main recommendations with regard to the following subjects. The Land Revenue Commission in its Report, Volume I, page 74, stated as follows:—

"The economic difficulties that exist in Bengal today are primarily due to the everincreasing pressure of population on land."

On page 86, the Commission says: "We consider that the pressure of population on the land is the ultimate cause of Bengal's economic troubles." Section 23 puts two definite clogs on the use of the occupancy holdings and section 25 is the operative section thereon. The establishment of a *hât*, the erection of a shop, a godown, a mill or a factory render the holdings liable for the penalty provided in this section, *i.e.*, *ejectment*

Now, Sir, sections 23 and 25 of the present Bengal Tenancy Act provides that as soon as a factory, a shop, a godown, or a mill is erected in an occupancy holding, it becomes liable to ejectment. Now, as regards the agricultural population, due to pressure on land there is a vast surplus of them, and so if they under necessity set up a shop or a godown or a mill or a factory in an occupancy holding, it becomes liable to ejectment, because the previous intention of the holding was that it would be used only for agricultural purposes and as soon as the original purpose is changed, it becomes ejectable. Sir, according to the recommendation of the Revenue Commission and also so far as our own experience goes we find that it has become absolutely necessary that the tenant should be given the right to establish *hâts* or to erect a shop, or a godown or a mill or a factory if I can so manage in his own occupancy holding. So, to enable them sections 23 and 25 should be amended accordingly and I have proposed an amendment in section 23 and also in section 25 to effect these changes. These restrictions are great handicaps in the spread of subsidiary occupation among the vast agricultural population. So it is high time that these restrictions should be removed from the Statute Book.

The insertion of the words "or equitable" in section 32(c) has been made according to the recommendations of the Revenue Commission in page 139, volume 1, which runs as follows: "We think that when there is a marked fall in the price of agricultural produce it is desirable to compare prices at shorter than 10 years. It has been proposed to remedy this defect by adding the words 'or equitable'." In the present Bengal Tenancy Act it is provided that rent cannot be reduced unless there is a fall in the price of the agricultural produce for continuous 10 years. Sometimes there is a rise for 5 years and there is a fall for 5 years. So, tenants cannot get any benefit therefrom. My Bill proposes to insert the word "or equitable" so that the court may be empowered to give relief to the tenants in case of fall of price of agricultural produce even for a shorter period than 10 years.

By the Bengal Tenancy Amendment Act of 1938 the enhancement of rent was suspended for 10 years pending an enquiry by a competent authority to decide whether enhancement of rent could be permanently abolished.

Now, the House will remember that by the amending Act of 1938 the House agreed and a legislation was passed to suspend the enhancement of rent for 10 years only and 5 years have already passed. My Bill proposes that so far as the reduction of rent is concerned there are several sections in the present Bengal Tenancy Act to abolish that section so that the reduction may be permanent. The Commission in page 15, volume 1, states as follows: "The Court of Directors wrote, it is an object of perpetual settlement that it should secure to the great body of *raiyats* the same equity and certainty as to the amount of their rent and the same undisturbed enjoyment of the fruits of their industry which we mean to give to the *zemindars* themselves."

In page 16 of volume 1 it goes on to say, "The intention of the Permanent Settlement was therefore to confirm the *Khudkhast raiyats* in their existing customary rights and to provide against enhancement beyond *pergana* rates and against arbitrary exactions". So it is apparent from the above observations that enhancement of occupancy *raiyats'* rent was not contemplated by the Permanent Settlement and hence like *abwabs* or illegal exactions the sooner it goes the better for the country.

It appears from the recommendation of the Revenue Commission that so far as enhancement of rent is concerned the Permanent Settlement only contemplated enhancement up to the *pergana* rate. The *pergana* rate of rent, as has just now been suggested by Mr. Abdul Hakim, does not go beyond 8 annas or 10 annas, or even less than that—2 annas or 3 annas per acre. According to the Permanent Settlement and the observation contained therein enhancement of rent was practically illegal and without any authority. So, the section which gives the power, namely, section 38 has been amended in accordance with the recommendations of the Revenue Commission contained in pages 140 and 138 of volume 1 wherein it says, "We recommend that such deductions should be made through the agency of Revenue Officers." Section 38 of the Tenancy Act would have to be amended to deal with such cases in areas to be notified by the Government.

We recommend that a new sub-clause should be added in section 38 of the Tenancy Act in order to allow reductions of rent on the ground that the existing rate of rent is substantially higher than the prevailing rate.

Now, there is a provision in section 31 of the present Bengal Tenancy Act which provides that there can be reduction of rent on the ground that the existing rate of rent is substantially higher than the prevailing rate. So far as my experience goes, in the civil court nobody has up till now obtained any reduction in rent under this particular section.

From a perusal of paragraphs 178, 189 and 197 of the report of the Commission, volume I, it appears that the homestead land is exempt from assessment in all the provinces which the Commission visited. So Bengal should not be denied this privilege enjoyed by other provinces uniformly.

If we read the Commission's report it appears that so far as homestead land of the agriculturist is concerned it is entirely free from any assessment. So while it is the case in all other provinces, Bengal alone should not be singled out and Bengal should have the benefit which the other provinces are now enjoying.

So, I beg to state that the provisions that I have wanted to incorporate in my Bill are all for the benefit of the tenants and also they do not militate against the interests of the landlords so much because the present provision requires that these things must be embodied and enacted in a Bill so that the tenants may have a subsidiary occupation to improve their condition.

I, therefore, hope that my Bill will be accepted by the Hon'ble Minister in charge and the party supporting them also will lend their support to it.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I move by way of amendment that the Bill be re-circulated for the purpose of eliciting further opinion thereon by the 31st December, 1943.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, this Bill has had a chequered career. It was circulated for information on a motion carried through the Bengal Legislative Assembly on the 6th September, 1940. Associations and public bodies were consulted by the Assembly. Out of 6 only 4 expressed their views and all of them were against the provisions of the Bill.

The Bill, Sir, seeks to provide for the following matters:

First, it seeks to repeal section 23 of the Bengal Tenancy Act. As you know, Sir, it provides that an occupancy *raiyat* may use his land in any manner which does not materially impair the value of the land or render it unfit for the purposes of the tenancy.

Secondly, my honourable friend seeks by his Bill to repeal section 25. Section 25 is a section which lays down the grounds on which an occupancy *raiyat* may be ejected from his holding.

By the third series of amendments my honourable friend seeks to repeal sections 29, 30, 31A, 31B, 33 and 37 of the Bengal Tenancy Act relating to enhancement of rent.

By the fourth series of amendments my honourable friend seeks amendment of sections 31, 32 and 38 so as to confer additional rights upon the *raiyats* to get reduction of rent. He furthermore seeks to insert a new section to provide that the homestead area of the occupancy *raiyat* be exempted from rent and the rent of the holding comprising a homestead be reduced to that extent.

These, Sir, are proposals of a far-reaching character, and pending decision on the question of the recommendations of the Floud Commission, I propose that the Bill be re-circulated for the purpose of eliciting further public opinion.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Sir, may I be allowed to reply to the points just now raised by the Hon'ble Minister?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Israil, it is not permissible to reply at this stage, but you can rise on a point of personal explanation.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: I have asked that my Bill be referred to a Select Committee, and the Hon'ble Minister has proposed by way of amendment that the Bill be re-circulated. Sir, the Bill was once circulated. Now he has raised certain points in favour of re-circulation and I want to reply to those points. As the mover of this Bill I think I have got the right of reply.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no such precedent that you can reply when the Hon'ble Minister has finished his speech You can only speak by way of explanation.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Whatever that may be I want to say this: the Hon'ble Minister has said that the changes to be effected in the Bill are of a far-reaching nature, but if the Hon'ble Minister goes through the Statement of Objects and Reasons attached to this Bill

Babu NARENDRA NARAYAN CHAKRABARTY: On a point of order, Sir. মাননীয় সদস্য মহোদয় তাঁর point of explanationএ মন্ত্রী মহাশয় যা বলেছেন তার জবাব দিতে পারেন না। কোন রিপ্লি? কথায় আপত্তি থাকলে তা দেখাতে পারেন। তা ছাড়া তার জবাবস্বরূপ লম্বা বক্তৃতা দিতে পারেন না।

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have permitted him to explain only the points raised by the Hon'ble Minister and not to make a speech.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: If the Hon'ble Minister goes through the Statement of Objects and Reasons attached to the Bill he will find that so far as this Bill is concerned, it has been based upon the recommendations of the Land Revenue Commission which has been presided over by no less a person than Sir Francis Floud who was imported from Canada and England and whose services had to be requisitioned by His Majesty's Government. The Commission was presided over by a man of that calibre and the provisions of my Bill are based upon the recommendation of that august body which worked for two to three years. I think no useful purpose will be served by re-circulating the Bill again, because it is based upon the recommendations of a body which obtained the opinion of the country. The recommendations were under circulation in the country for a long time and people also expressed their opinion. Not only that, the Bill was again circulated for eliciting opinion thereon and the Hon'ble Minister will see that the opinion was all in favour of the passage of this Bill. Nobody expressed any opinion that the Bill should

not be passed. So I think it is only the obstructive policy or rather the shelving policy of the present Ministry just to please the land-owning class that he has not agreed to the proposal. There is no other ground for his opposing my motion.

The motion of the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee that the Bengal Tenancy (Amendment) Bill, 1940, be re-circulated for the purpose of eliciting further opinion thereon by the 31st May, 1943, was then put and agreed to.

The Bengal Fisheries Bill, 1940.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now we will come back to the Fisheries Bill.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, this Bill has been drawn up on the model of a Bill, as stated in the Statement of Objects and Reasons, introduced in the Assembly by Mr Narendranath Das Gupta in 1937 with certain additions and modifications. If I were to sum up, the salient features of the Bill would be—

(1) No fishery should be settled to any person other than a fisherman or a co-operative fishermen's society registered under Act XII of 1912 for a term of less than three years.

(2) The settlement of a fishery should follow, in the main, the principles laid down in Chapter X of the Bengal Tenancy Act.

(3) The tenant of a fishery making payment of rent shall be entitled to a receipt.

(4) Interest on arrears of rent should be 3¾ per cent. per annum.

(5) No fresh settlement of Government fishery should be made after the expiry of the existing settlement and any fisherman or a Fishermen's Co-operative Society shall be entitled to catch fish without payment of rent or without entering into any new settlement with the Government.

(6) Any tenant of a fishery, whether of Government or of private proprietor who holds the same fishery for twelve consecutive years, shall not be liable to be ejected except on the ground of his refusal to pay rent.

(7) Payment of illegal cesses and *abwabs* are to be abolished and the exaction of such *abwabs* should be penalised.

My honourable friend, the sponsor of the Bill, has in his Statement of Objects and Reasons stated that the Bill has been introduced with a view to rationalise the settlement of fisheries on the basis of fair and equitable rent and stabilise the fish industry which forms a vital part of the economic structure of the province. According to him if the Bill is passed into law, it will benefit the proprietors as well as the catchers. The proprietors will receive regular and stable rents, while the catchers will be saved from illegal and unjust impositions.

After the Bill was drafted, Government appointed a Special Officer. That Special Officer has submitted his report. I am not differing from the Statement of Objects and Reasons made by my honourable friend, namely, the stabilisation of the fish industry, but on the basis of the report of the Special Officer it may be found necessary for Government to introduce a more comprehensive legislation. If that is the decision of Government, then Government will carry that decision into effect. Meantime I am not opposing reference of the Bill to the Select Committee as proposed.

The motion of Mr. Atul Chandra Kumar that after the name of Mr. Amrita Lal Mandal the following be added—

Mr. Shahedali,
Mr. Dhananjoy Roy,
Rai Bahadur Jogesh Chandra Sen,
Kazi Abul Masud,
Mr. Atul Chandra Sen,
Mr. J. R. Walker, and
Haji Safiruddin Ahmed,

was then put and agreed to.

The motion of Mr. Amrita Lal Mandal, as amended by Mr. Atul Chandra Kumar, that the Bengal Fisheries Bill, 1940, be referred to a Select Committee consisting of—

(1) the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department,
(2) Mr. Upendra Nath Edbar,
(3) Mr. Syed Hasanali Chaudhury,
(4) Mr. Monomohan Das,
(5) Mr. Mirza Abdul Hafiz,
(6) Mr. Charu Chandra Roy,
(7) Mr. Surendra Nath Biswas,
(8) Maulvi Muhammad Israil,
(9) Mrs. Hemaprova Majumdar,
(10) Mr. Amrita Lal Mandal (the mover),
(11) Mr. Shahedali,
(12) Mr. Dhananjoy Roy,
(13) Rai Bahadur Jogesh Chandra Sen,
(14) Maulvi Kazi Abul Masud,
(15) Mr. Atul Chandra Sen,
(16) Mr. J. R. Walker, and
(17) Haji Safiruddin Ahmed,

with instructions to submit their report by June 30, 1943, the number of members forming the quorum being five, was then put and agreed to.

The Bengal Medical (Amendment) Bill, 1937.

Mr. ANUKUL CHANDRA DAS: Sir, I beg to move that the Bengal Medical (Amendment) Bill, 1937, be continued under the proviso to rule 19(2) of the Bengal Legislative Assembly Procedure Rules.

The motion was put and agreed to.

Mr. ANUKUL CHANDRA DAS: Sir, I beg to move that the Bengal Medical (Amendment) Bill, 1937, be referred to a Select Committee consisting of—

(1) the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department,
(2) Dr. Sanaullah,
(3) Khan Sahib Jasimuddin Ahmed,
(4) Mr. Mia Abdul Hafiz,
(5) Mr. Syed Abdul Majid,
(6) Rai Bahadur Jogesh Chandra Sen,
(7) Rai Sahib Kirit Bhusan Das,
(8) Mr. J. W. Chippendale,
(9) Khan Bahadur Mohammed Ali, and
(10) Mr. Anukul Chandra Das (the mover),

with instructions to submit their report by the 31st December, 1943, the number of members forming the quorum being five

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA KUMAR: Sir, I beg to move by way of amendment that after the name of Mr. Anukul Chandra Das the following names be added—

(1) Mr. W. A. M. Walker,
(2) Dr. Sharat Chandra Mukherji,
(3) Dr. Gobinda Chandra Bhowmick,
(4) Mr. Asimuddin Ahmed,
(5) Dr. A. M. Malik,
(6) Khan Bahadur Dr. Syed Muhammad Siddique, and
(7) Mr. Puspajit Barma.

Sir, I have got their consent.

Mr. ANUKUL CHANDRA DAS: Sir, I accept the names proposed.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Sir, before this motion is put, may I say a few words with regard to the proposed legislation? The object of the Bill is to amend section 17 of the Bengal Medical Act so as to extend the privilege of registration to the following classes of persons who are not entitled to be registered at present, viz.—

(1) any person who holds a degree or diploma or certificate from any university, college or school (subsequently) approved by the Council and who was practising the western system of medicine on the day the Bengal Medical Act came into force, *i.e.*, on the 27th May, 1914; and
(2) any person who was trained in an unrecognised medical institution (which was recognized afterwards) and joined the medical profession before the enforcement of the member's Bill provided he passes a special examination such as the Council may hold for the purpose.

As regards persons in class (1) such persons were allowed a full opportunity to qualify themselves for registration by sitting at the final examination

for the licentiateship within two years from the constitution of the State Medical Faculty. This concession was extended with the sanction of the Government of India up to the examination held in November 1916.

The unsuccessful candidates at the Final Licentiate Examination held in November, 1916, who appeared under the transitory provisions and failed in not more than two subjects were admitted up to and including the first examination in 1919 without being required to receive instructions in the subject or subjects in which they failed. This concession was further extended up to the examination in November, 1919; so that the majority of this class of students received this concession for a period of about five years. Students of the Belgachia Medical School, who joined the school in 1913 and passed the Final Examination of that institution in 1917, were permitted to appear at the Final Examination of the State Medical Faculty without being required to undergo any further training up to the year 1924. It will be seen therefore that persons trained in medical institutions, who came to practise prior to the year 1914, were not automatically brought on the register, but were allowed to sit at the Final Licentiate Examination of the State Medical Faculty and that sufficient opportunity was given to these men to quality for registration. This Bill seeks to provide that the privilege of registration should now, after 28 years, be extended to such persons who failed to avail themselves of the opportunity given under the transitory provisions. This ought to be borne in mind before the House decides either way whether the Select Committee should be appointed or not.

As regards persons in category (2) the proposal virtually amounts to allowing persons trained in unrecognised institutions to sit at the Final Licentiate Examination of the State Medical Faculty.

I am not opposing the motion for a reference to the Select Committee, with instructions to submit their report by the 31st December, 1943. But it is necessary that the Select Committee should embark upon their labours with their eyes open having regard to the facts which I have placed before the House in order that the Bill might be given such shape in the Select Committee as will be consonant with those facts.

I accept the motion with regard to the Select Committee.

The motion of Mr. Atul Chandra Kumar that after the name of Mr. Anukul Chandra Das the following names be added:—

(1) Mr. W. A. M. Walker,
(2) Dr. Sharat Chandra Mukherji,
(3) Dr. Gobinda Chandra Bhowmick,
(4) Mr. Asimuddin Ahmed,
(5) Dr. A. M. Malik,
(6) Khan Bahadur Dr. Syed Muhammad Siddique, and
(7) Mr. Puspajit Barma,

was then put and agreed to.

The motion of Mr. Anukul Chandra Das, as amended, that the Bengal Medical (Amendment) Bill, 1937, be referred to a Select Committee consisting of—

(1) the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Public Health and Local Self-Government Department,
(2) Dr. Sanaullah,
(3) Khan Sahib Jasimuddin Ahmed,
(4) Mr. Mia Abdul Hafiz,
(5) Mr. Syed Abdul Majid,
(6) Rai Bahadur Jogesh Chandra Sen,
(7) Rai Sahib Kirit Bhusan Das,
(8) Mr. J. W. Chippendale,
(9) Khan Bahadur Mohammed Ali,
(10) Mr. W. A. M. Walker,
(11) Dr. Sharat Chandra Mukherji,
(12) Dr. Gobinda Chandra Bhowmick,
(13) Mr. Asimuddin Ahmed,
(14) Dr. A. M. Malik,
(15) Khan Bahadur Dr. Syed Muhammad Siddique,
(16) Mr. Puspajit Barma, and
(17) Rai Sahib Anukul Chandra Das (the mover),

with instructions to submit their report by the 31st December, 1943, the number of members forming the quorum being five was then put and agreed to.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: At this stage, may we humbly request you, Sir, to permit by mutual agreement the introduction of a number of Bills before others which are to be referred to the Select Committee; otherwise there will be a massacre of innocents as it is known in the parliamentary language.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Dr Sanyal, I cannot change the order of ballot.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: It is only for introduction, Sir.

Maulvi ABDUL WAHAB KHAN: We also agree to that.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Under the rules the order of priority as determined by the ballot shall be final.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: By agreement, the Speaker can give precedence to Bills.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: If you insist I shall see what can be done. But I understand that it is the intention of the House to close today at 6-30 p.m.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is there any objection to the mere introduction of a number of Bills which have been waiting for a long time?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: All right.

(The House was then adjourned for 15 minutes.)

(After adjournment.)

Supply of petrol to members.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, as the prayer time is not yet over I think you will permit us to go on with our business without raising the question of quorum. I should in the mean time like to enquire what arrangements have been made to arrange the supply of petrol to the honourable members of this House.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: As regards the supply of petrol we have taken every necessary step that is possible for the Assembly Department to take but Government is still sitting over it. This time some members approached me on this question and we have asked the Government to take steps so that each member owning a car may get one gallon of petrol daily instead of half a gallon daily as at present

Mr. K. SHAHABUDDIN: I have seen an order which allows the members of the other House more petrol than what we have been getting, and I should like to know why this discriminatory treatment is meted out to the members of our House.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Perhaps because the other one is the House of Lords!

The Bengal Tenancy (Amendment) Bill, 1940.

Mr. MAQBUL HOSSAIN: Sir, I beg to move that the Bengal Tenancy (Amendment) Bill, 1940, be referred to a Select Committee consisting of—

(1) the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department,
(2) Maulvi Abu Hossain Sarkar,
(3) Maulvi Asimuddin Ahmed,
(4) Maulvi Rajibuddin Tarafdar,
(5) Mr. Tarak Nath Mukherjea, M.B.E.,
(6) Mr. G. Morgan, C.I.E.,
(7) Maulvi Muhammad Israil,
(8) Maulana Md. Maniruzzaman Islamabadi,
(9) Maulvi Abdul Hakim (Mymensingh),
(10) Babu Kshetra Nath Singha,
(11) Mr. Md. Abul Fazl,
(12) Khan Sahib Maulvi Hasanuzzaman,
(13) Maulvi Abdur Razzak,
(14) Mr. Puspajit Barma,
(15) Mr. Ramizuddin Ahmed, and
(16) Mr. Maqbul Hossain (the mover),

with instructions to submit their report by the 30th June, 1943, the number of members forming the quorum being five.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: On a point of order, Sir. The honourable member cannot insert new names without first taking your consent.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Dr. Sanyal, I have given my consent.

Mr. MAQBUL HUSAIN : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, ১৯৪০ সালে যখন আমার এই বিল পরিষদে উত্থাপিত হইয়াছিল তখন সে সম্বন্ধে বিস্তারিত বক্তৃতা দিয়াছিলাম। কিন্তু আমার মনে হয় ঐ সব বক্তৃতাবকথা এই Houseএর মাননীয় মেম্বর মহোদয়গণের অনেকেই ভুলিয়া গিয়াছেন। তাঁহাদের অবগতির জন্য এই বিলের কি উদ্দেশ্য, ইহা দ্বারা কৃষক প্রজার কি উপকার করা যাইতে পারে, সে সম্বন্ধে পুনরায় নিবেদন করিতেছি।

বঙ্গীয় প্রজাস্বত্ব আইনের ২৭ হইতে ৩৭ ধারায় দখলীস্বত্ব বিশিষ্ট প্রজার খাজনা বৃদ্ধি করিবার নানা প্রকার বিধান আছে। জমিদারগণ প্রজার খাজনা যাহাতে বৃদ্ধি করিতে না পারেন তজ্জন্য প্রস্তাবিত প্রজাস্বত্ব আইন সংশোধনী বিলে প্রজাস্বত্ব আইন হইতে ঐ সকল ধারাগুলি উঠাইয়া দিবার প্রস্তাব করা হইয়াছে। ঐ ধারাগুলি উঠাইয়া দিলে জমিদারগণ কোন অবস্থাতেই দখলী-স্বত্ব বিশিষ্ট প্রজার খাজনা বৃদ্ধি করিতে পারিবেন না। প্রজার খাজনা যেরূপ অসম্ভব পরিমাণে বৃদ্ধি পাইয়াছে তাহাতে প্রজার খাজনার পরিমাণ আরও অনেক কম হওয়া প্রয়োজনীয়। এই বিষয়ে প্রজাস্বত্ব আইনের সংশোধনী বিলের তৃতীয় ধারায় প্রস্তাব করা হইয়াছে যে ১৯০০ সালের ৩১শে ডিসেম্বর তারিখে প্রজার খাজনা যাহা ছিল তাহা হইতে শতকরা ৫০৲ বাদে যাহা হইবে তাহাই প্রজার খাজনা বলিয়া গণ্য হইবে। জমিদারগণ ইহার অতিরিক্ত খাজনা আদায় করিতে পারিবেন না। প্রস্তাবিত প্রজাস্বত্ব আইন বলবৎ হওয়ার তারিখে যে খাজনা বাকী থাকিবে তাহার অতিরিক্ত হারে আদায় করিতে পারিবেন না। এই আইন বলবৎ হওয়ার তারিখে কিম্বা তাহার পরে যে সকল বাকী খাজনার মোকদ্দমা আদালতে দায়ের থাকিবে তাহাও পূর্ব্বোক্ত হারে খাজনার ডিক্রি হইবে। এ আইন বলবৎ হওয়ার সময় যে সকল বাকী খাজনার ডিক্রিজারী দায়ের থাকিবে তাহাও প্রজার খাজনা পূর্ব্বোক্ত হারে কমাইয়া ডিক্রিজারী করিতে হইবে।

ইং ১৯০০ সনের ৩১শে ডিসেম্বরের পূর্ব্বে যে জোত পত্তন করা হইয়াছে তাহার খাজনা কমাইয়া জোত পত্তনের সময় যে খাজনা ছিল তাহার উপর শতকরা ৩৩৲ বাদে যাহা হইবে তাহাই প্রজার খাজনা ধার্য্য হইবে।

প্রজাস্বত্ব আইনের ৬৭ ধারায় বিধান আছে যে বকেয়া খাজনার উপর জমিদার শতকরা বার্ষিক ৬।০ সুদ পাইবেন। প্রস্তাবিত বিলে ঐ ধারা সংশোধন করিয়া সুদের হার শতকরা বার্ষিক ৩৲০ করার প্রস্তাব করা হইয়াছে।

প্রজাস্বত্ব আইনের ৮৮ ধারায় জমিজমা খরিদের যে বিধান আছে তাহা অত্যন্ত কঠিন এবং ব্যয় সাপেক্ষ। প্রস্তাবিত বিলের ষষ্ঠ ধারায় জমিজমা খরিদের সহজ বিধান করা হইয়াছে এবং জমিজমা খরিদের ফি মাত্র ১৲ ধার্য্য করা হইয়াছে। এই বিল আইনে পরিণত হইলে জমিজমা খরিদের নোটিশ ইউনিয়ন বোর্ড বা ইউনিয়ন বোর্ডের যোগে জমিদার ও শরিক প্রজার উপর জারী হইলেই জমিজমা খারিজ হইয়াছে বলিয়া গণ্য হইবে।

দান বিক্রয় ও স্বেচ্ছা দ্বারা জমি হস্তান্তরিত হইলে দলীল রেজিষ্ট্রী হওয়ার পর সাবরেজিষ্ট্রার যোগে জমিদার ও শরিক প্রজাদের উপর নোটিশ দিতে হইবে। এবং ঐ নোটিশ জারী হইলেই জমিজমা খারিজ হইয়াছে বলিয়া গণ্য হইবে। ডিক্রি বাবদ জমি নিলাম হইলে নিলাম বহাল হওয়ার পূর্ব্বে আদালতের সারভে অফিসার যোগে ঐরূপ নোটিশ দিতে হইবে। এবং নোটিশ

জারী হইলে জমিজমা খারিজ হইয়াছে বলিয়া গণ্য হইবে। জমিদার এবং শরিক প্রজার নোটিশ জারী হওয়ার পর ৩০ দিনের মধ্যে আপত্তি দাখিল করিতে পারিবে। যদি নোটিশ জারীর ৩০ দিনের মধ্যে কোন আপত্তি আদালতে দাখিল করা না হয় তাহা হইলে জমিজমা খারিজ হইয়াছে বলিয়া গণ্য হইবে এবং উহা জমিদার এবং শরিক প্রজাগণের উপর বাধ্যকর হইবে।

Adjournment.

The House was then adjourned at 7-3 p.m. till 10 a.m. on Saturday, the 20th February, 1943, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the Provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Saturday, the 20th February, 1943, at 10 a.m.

Present:

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. SYED JALALUDDIN HASHEMY) in the Chair, 5 Hon'ble Ministers and 171 members.

Non-attendance of Ministers.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, before you begin questions I want to draw your attention to one fact. In spite of vehement protest Saturday was fixed for a meeting. I would draw your attention to the fact that the Government Benches are empty and that shows the amount of courtesy with which members of the Opposition are treated Even the members of the Cabinet are absent I submit, Sir, that it is not fair to the members of the Opposition.

YOUSUF MIRZA: There is still plenty of time.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: They will soon come.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Relief to the cyclone-affected people of the Chatal subdivision.

*52. **Mr. HARENDRA NATH DOLUI:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department aware that the people in the subdivision of Ghatal in the district of Midnapore have been victimised by the recent cyclone and the tidal bore?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what sort of help Government have rendered for relief up to the present time?

MINISTER in charge of the REVENUE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee): (*a*) Yes, by the cyclone, but not so far as I am aware, by the tidal bore.

(*b*) Gratuitous relief Rs.2,408 and agricultural loan Rs.78,000. Besides, cloth and blankets have been distributed among the worst sufferers.

Mr. P. BANERJI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether these cloths and blankets were purchased by Government or supplied to Government by philanthropic organisations?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: In both the manner.

Mr. HARENDRA NATH DOLUI: May I enquire whether members of the Legislature representing that constituency will be permitted to render help in the matter of distribution?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Most certainly. I will welcome the assistance of my honourable friend who represents that constituency.

Mr. P. BANERJI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the amount spent by Government in this direction, I mean in the purchase of cloths and blankets?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I have not got the figure here, but if the honourable member wants the figure, the figure will be made available to him.

Mr. P. BANERJI: Cannot the Hon'ble Minister give us an approximate idea of the amount?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I am sorry I cannot give an approximate idea.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Can the Hon'ble Minister give an idea of the pieces of cloth and blanket distributed?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Does the honourable member refer to the particular subdivision or the whole of the affected area?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: I mean the particular subdivision, Ghatal.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I am afraid I have not got the figure here, but if the honourable member wants the figures I can give the information later for the whole district, subdivision by subdivision, union by union.

Mr. KISHORI PATI ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what portion of Rs. 4 lakhs sanctioned for test relief work has been spent for the Ghatal subdivision?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I submit, Sir, that the question of the honourable member does not arise out of the main question, but I shall certainly look into the matter and if any test relief work is necessary in the subdivision it shall be provided for.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is in a position to give the number of agriculturists to whom this sum of Rs. 78,000 has been allotted?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Yes, I shall be in a position to do so but not this morning. I have not got the figure this morning.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is in a position to give us the number also with regard to the gratuitous relief?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Yes, I shall be in a position to give the figure but not this morning.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: When can we expect it? Does the Hon'ble Minister want a separate notice?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I shall give the information as early as possible. No separate notice is necessary.

Transfer of a prisoner from a police lock-up.

*53. **Babu ASHUTOSH MALLICK:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that Mr. Dwijendra Nath Das when taken from one police lock-up to another during night on the 9th and 13th of December, 1942, in a police motor van was taken out at 11 p.m. but did not reach his destination till after midnight?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason thereof?

MINISTER in charge of the HOME DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq): I am unable to give any reply unless more detailed particulars about the alleged incident are given.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Sir, with regard to this answer the detailed particulars have already been given, because the time and the date have been given. I do not understand what more detailed particulars are wanted. The time and date and the name of the prisoner have been given. What further particulars does the Hon'ble Minister want?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That will be for the questioner to consider. If he cannot give any more particulars, I will have nothing more to say.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Sir, my question has not been answered. What I want to know is what are the other particulars which the Hon'ble Minister desire to have in addition to the name of the prisoner, the date on which the incident took place and also the time. What further particulars does he want? Let him say that.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: If the honourable member will read the question he will find that it is extremely vague and indefinite. More data are wanted and instances must be mentioned. The honourable member does not know anything and is simply interrupting me. The member who put the question knows what further particulars are required.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is not a breach of rule to transfer a prisoner from one lock-up to another lock-up?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Ordinarily, that would be so, but in this case there must be some cause which I cannot disclose. If more particulars are given, I shall give a reply.

Report of Tribunal for the release of security prisoners.

***54. Mr. PRATUL CHANDRA GANGULI:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the Tribunal for reviewing the cases of the security prisoners submitted its findings on the 27th August, 1942?

(*b*) With reference to the replies given to starred question No. 61 on the 26th September, 1942, that "the Tribunal's recommendations are under consideration" and to unstarred question No. 36 on the 30th September, 1942, that "the matter is under consideration", will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Government have arrived at any decision regarding the release of the security prisoners?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the result thereof?

(*d*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when the decision is likely to be arrived at?

(*e*) Have the Government accepted all the recommendations of the Tribunal?

(*f*) If the answer to (*e*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons therefor?

(*g*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the number of security prisoners that have been recommended for release by the Tribunal; and

(*ii*) the number of security prisoners that have been released on the recommendation of the Tribunal?

(*h*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether all the security prisoners recommended by the Tribunal will be released?

(*i*) If the answer to (*h*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons therefor?

(*j*) Do the Government contemplate to communicate to the security prisoners concerned the recommendations that have been made by the Tribunal and the decision arrived at by the Government in each case?

(*k*) If the answer to (*j*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons therefor?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) The widespread campaign of sabotage and violence which followed the ratification by the All-India Congress Committee of the Congress Working Committee Resolution on the 8th August, 1942, and the subsequent

arrest of leading Congressmen has introduced an entirely new factor in the situation and in the interest of public security, Government have been compelled to postpone consideration of the recommendations of the Tribunal.

(*e*) to (*f*), (*h*) and (*i*) Do not arise.

(*g*) I am not prepared to furnish this information in the public interest.

(*j*) No.

(*k*) I consider that the disclosure of the information would be against public interest.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answer (*g*) to the question "will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the number of security prisoners that have been recommended for release by the Tribunal, and the number of security prisoners that have been released on the recommendation of the Tribunal," may we be given further light as to how public interest would be jeopardised if these two pieces of information are given?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: May I point out, Sir, that if I am advised that the disclosure is against public interest I have got nothing further to say.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: With reference to answer (*b*), do I understand the Hon'ble Minister to say that the campaign of sabotage and violence as suggested in the answer still continues?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Fortunately, it is almost at an end, and if the present improvement continues we will be able to take up the consideration and make an announcement as early as possible.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the answer given is not his own but the answer is as he has been advised as he has said just now?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am sorry the honourable member misunderstood me. The answer is mine. As regards the interpretation, sometimes when I am in doubt I consult my legal advisers and if I am advised that the interpretation I have given is the correct interpretation I act accordingly.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: My question is very simple. The question is: how many of the prisoners were recommended for release? The Hon'ble Minister says that he cannot give the information in the public interest. On a point of order, Sir, I would like you to give a ruling as to whether a member is entitled to receive an answer to a question of this character simply if the Hon'ble Minister says: "I will not reply in the public interest". I would like to know whether a member of the House has not a right to know what public interest is jeopardised and in what respect it is jeopardised, because we feel that the mere disclosure of the number of prisoners recommended for release cannot in any way jeopardise public interest.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Since my honourable friend has appealed to Mr. Deputy Speaker for a ruling, I may tell him that on this particular point, namely, the mere number I will give the information required.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister tell this House whether these prisoners, while they were in jail, committed any violence before they were recommended by the Tribunal for release and for that reason consideration of their cases was stopped?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I do not suggest that the security prisoners committed violence while in custody. The position is that immediately after the recommendations were made lawlessness broke out. That introduced a new factor into the situation and this is a matter entirely within the discretion of His Excellency the Governor, and in this matter we have also got to carry out the directions of the Government of India. Now it is not that they did any act of violence from day to day but the act of violence was prevailing throughout which introduced a new factor and we had to consider whether or not giving effect to the recommendations of the Committee would not disturb the situation that has been existing.

Mr. A. F. STARK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he accepts full responsibility for the reply stated to this question?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I take the fullest responsibility for the reply that has been given.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how long the detention would continue and even if this is a preventive detention, as has been explained, what machinery has been devised by Government to see that these persons are not kept one day longer than is felt by Government to be absolutely necessary?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The detention is not preventive. It is only precautionary. I can tell the honourable member that we are actually taking into consideration the question of coming to a final decision and announcing that to the public because there has been an improvement in the political situation Being kept in custody is a precautionary measure. As I have said, this has been done in consideration of certain factors to which I have referred. We have been considering, we will consider and we shall see that prisoners are not kept in custody longer than is absolutely necessary. It may be that some detention is unjustified from the ordinary point of view, but these things do happen.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: In connection with a question yesterday the Hon'ble Chief Minister used these words "preventive detention" and now he says it is not preventive. Of course, the difference between preventive and precautionary is very thin. Personally I do not understand the difference in language, but there is nothing to emphasise that it is not preventive but precautionary. We would like to have a clear statement as

to when Government will come to a definite decision on this point so that we may know that prisoners may not be detained one day more than is felt by Government to be absolutely necessary.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Am I expected to try and make out a distinction between preventive and precautionary? As I understand, preventive means taking measures so that something may be prevented. Precaution is that something is done in order that something may not happen. There is really not much difference. It is a distinction without a difference. As regards the other part of the question, I can only say that I know that I would be pilloried by questions of this kind and I would like to escape from the situation by giving an early announcement. I shall do my best to look into the matter and make an early announcement.

Left-over Questions.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Sir, what about left-over questions? Will they not be taken up today?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have given instructions to print all the held-over questions and to circulate them to members either on Monday or Tuesday, so that you can put supplementary questions from the printed list.

GENERAL DISCUSSION OF THE BUDGET.

Mr. I. D. JALAN: In initiating the general discussion on the Budget this morning I cannot but emphasise the abnormal situation in which we are meeting this morning here. It is a well-known fact that Mahatma Gandhi who is the most important personality in the present day India is fasting, and fasting in a situation in which there are very grave apprehensions regarding his life. We are meeting today under the shadow of a great catastrophe which might happen and which may convulse the feelings of this country to a great extent. I do not wish to enter into the merits or demerits of the detention of Mahatma Gandhi at this stage though I wish to make it absolutely clear that we on this side of the House do not agree with the propriety of his detention, but on humanitarian grounds even I would have liked, and I believe that every body in this House would have liked the Government to release Mahatma Gandhi and to create an atmosphere in which there would have been a chance for a peaceful solution of the problems which are troubling this country. But it seems that the Government of India is determined to follow its policy of not releasing him which we consider to be entirely wrong. In such a situation, we on this side of the House, owe an explanation to the House as to why we, the members of the Congress Party, have attended this session when we abstained from attending the sessions before. Sir, we, as representatives of the people, owe a duty to our constituencies and to the country. The Budget which has been presented to this House is a war time budget and it contains many things which have to be discussed. We have however no inclination to discuss it in detail but to touch it in its broad outlines and incidentally to explain the fundamentals of the policy of the Government.

Sir, the first thing which we notice regarding the administration at present is that what we expected at the advent of the present Ministry has not been fulfilled. The deterioration that has taken place in the administration of this province is very grave indeed. We find that there has been a serious constitutional encroachment upon the rights and liberties of the people by the bureaucracy which governs this country and the Ministry is not taking adequate steps to safeguard such rights and liberties of the people. Our first emphatic protest, which we wish to record, is that we cannot tolerate any encroachment upon the Provincial Autonomy and on the rights and liberties to which the people and their representatives were entitled to by His Excellency the Governor of Bengal or by the permanent bureaucracy which I believe really governs this province at the present time. It is a well-known fact that when the Congress took up the reins of office in the provinces in 1937, an assurance was given by the Government of India that there will be practically no encroachment upon the decisions of the Ministry but that assurance has been seriously set at naught and so much so that Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee had to resign his seat in the Cabinet. I need not repeat what has already been said on the floor of this House by him. It is a well-known fact that Provincial Autonomy has now been reduced to a mockery. There is practically no Provincial Autonomy at present. The Ministers are being overridden even in their own spheres and they are swallowing the humble pie which we cannot tolerate.

The second thing about which we wish to record our emphatic protest is the policy of repression which has been going on in full swing in this province as well as in other parts of the country in the name of preservation of law and order.

Sir, the press is gagged and the people who think otherwise are not allowed to publish their statements in public. There is no other forum where we can ventilate our views save and except the forum in this House and we have got nothing else but to record our most emphatic protest against the way in which the repressive policy has been carried on by this Government setting at naught what had been achieved during the decades behind. That is a very serious matter so far as the rights and liberties of the people are concerned. We have not got that freedom of thought, that freedom of expression, that freedom of action for which this war is being fought and which are so much being emphasized by the great Powers who are fighting for the liberties of mankind in this world. If the history of the repressive policy for the last six months be written—and I am quite sure that when the time will come it will be written—it will provide one of the most inglorious chapters in the history of India and it will disclose not one Jallianwallabagh but many Jallianwallabaghs. The time is not yet ripe. The persons who represent the people and who could say something are no longer in our midst. They are gagged and they cannot speak. Even in Midnapore we find what has happened. I do not wish to tax the patience of this House by dilating upon the Midnapore tragedies. We know well what a serious calamity occurred there. We know quite well that for 15 days people did not know as to what the calamity was and what the sore

plight to which the population there had been reduced was. But, as I have stated, I do not wish to take the time of the House in unnecessarily dilating upon that aspect of the problem which has resulted in tremendous increase in the Police Budget because it has already been discussed in this House.

Sir, the third thing about which we wish to record our emphatic protest is the policy which Government have followed in order to provide food, clothing and the necessary essentials of life to the population of this province. The policy is very important indeed because it affects the every-day life of each and every human being who inhabits this portion of the country. The policy lacks co-ordination, the policy lacks a definite plan, the policy lacks everything that is possible and this is a very serious charge which the Ministry will have to face that the problem of food and essentials has not been solved by this Ministry in a satisfactory way, however difficult it may have been

The budget itself reflects want of a co-ordinated policy. We do not find any explanation of the different policies which Government want to pursue—neither in the speech of the Hon'ble Finance Minister nor by any statement preceding the discussion on the food question which took place in this House We do not know as yet as to what the policy which Government want to follow is in clear, unequivocal, precise and concise way so that we may know as to what is going to happen. Of course, the Hon'ble Finance Minister has stated that he has learnt that it took one year for England to devise a policy. If England took one year, I am doubtful whether during the pendency of the war our present Government will be able to devise any policy by which we can save the present situation.

Sir, I know that our present Finance Minister is overburdened with too many portfolios He is not only the Chief Minister of this province, but he is also the Finance Minister, he is also the Home Minister and at an age nearing about 70 it seems to be nearly an impossible task or rather it is superhuman for any man to tackle these big problems which are problems baffling the best solution which people can offer and specially when his mind is so much upset on the one side by Jinnah-mania and on the other by Governor-phobia Sir, I can well appreciate the difficulties of the Hon'ble Finance Minister. He is between the devil and the deep sea. He does not know as to what he is to do. We doubt whether the Hon'ble Chief Minister will be in a position to pilot the ship of this province in a satisfactory way. I have got every sympathy for the Hon'ble Finance Minister in his sad plight, but our sympathy will not solve the problems. We have got our duties to perform and the problems which are before this country and before this province and which must be satisfactorily solved; at least the food problem which cannot wait a single day must be solved and must be solved to the satisfaction of the people.

Sir, so far as the budget is concerned, the budget discloses a most gloomy picture showing a deficit of about Rs. 1,50,00,000. We know that this is war time and the budget cannot be balanced, but, at the same time, it is a fact that the nation-building departments which ought to have been

kept on and for which purpose the sales tax had been imposed and in respect of which the Government had pledged its words to apply its proceeds to the nation-building departments, have suffered and suffered considerably. We would have been glad had this been recompensed by a more determined and more efficient policy with regard to the war time problems of this province, but when we find that even in that sphere there is a lack of efficiency, we cannot congratulate the Government of Bengal on what they have done.

Sir, we know that during the past year, the normal course of legislation had been stopped. As a matter of fact, there was no session in last autumn. We have had no important Bills before us to discuss. The only problem which engaged the attention of the Government of Bengal was the war problem and the problems which arose on account of the war. But if we find that even those problems are not satisfactorily tackled, we cannot but condemn the present Ministry and we cannot but hold them wholly responsible to the people for the sufferings from which they are suffering at present.

The Hon'ble Minister in his budget speech has stated that with the help of the Government of India he has been able to control wheat and dal, but we who are wheat-eaters know quite well that as a result of this policy, wheat is not coming to Calcutta and at the same time wheat is not available save and except at the price of Rs. 30 per maund. Is this the policy of the Government of Bengal? For the last three months I have been finding that those persons who require wheat have to go to the black market and purchase wheat at the rate of Rs. 30 or Rs. 35 per maund. I know of many cases in which high personages have made requests for providing wheat at whatever cost it may be. This is the policy of the Government of Bengal and the people are constrained to think that the more control there is, the worse the situation is and if Government cannot effectively control, then it is better for them to relinquish all control and I am quite sure that there will be a great improvement in the situation as we find today.

Either there should be full effective control or no control at all. There is no midway between the two. If Government feels the difficulty of having a full effective control Government should abandon the control and leave the free flow of supply and demand to adjust itself. I am quite positive and I am reflecting the opinion of the people who knew that if there be no control certainly wheat and other foodstuff will be available and people will not have to canvass for a bag of wheat from some friend or other. It may be that the price of that wheat would be Rs. 12 or Rs. 13 or Rs. 14, but it will never be Rs. 30 per maund as it is now, and certainly the supply will be there. As a matter of fact, the whole policy of the Government of India including the policy which the Government of Bengal has followed in the matter of food supply is full of defects. For the last two years Government have been trying to control the prices without controlling supply and now they are attempting to control the supplies. I say that they are bound to fail because the first requisite for any control system is perfect honesty and

integrity in the official system which is going to control the situation. I am constrained and pained to say that corruption and bribery and black markets are the results of the present food-control system inaugurated in this country. There are very strong rumours that even the highest who are in control of the situation are not free from corruption. I do not know as to how far it is possible to say that it is so, but if you find that corruption is rampant, in that case how is it possible for you to control the food situation. I can give you a small instance as to why the price of wheat is Rs. 30 per maund today when the price of wheat is only Rs. 6 or 7 per maund in the Punjab. The reason is obvious. If a man wants to import a waggon of wheat from the Punjab he has first of all to meet a number of hurdles and overcome them. These hurdles mean expenditure of money. Every bribe that is given is added to the price and then when the wheat comes to Calcutta a portion is acquired by Government and the price which is paid is the controlled price. Now if I get a waggon of wheat and if a portion of the goods is acquired by Government at a price at which I suffer a loss of Rs. 5 or Rs. 6 per maund that loss has to be added to the price of the remainder of the wheat, and the price consequently goes high up. First of all, you have to bribe the Bengal officials to secure a permit for getting wheat, then you have to bribe the Punjab officials to obtain wheat, and then the Central Government officials and the transport officials, and then when wheat comes to Calcutta a portion of it is acquired by Government and you must bear the loss which you incur in giving that quantity to Government at a loss and then you must also be prepared for the risk of prosecution. Is it therefore possible for any human being, unless there is very great profit, to undergo so many trials and tribulations? But if there be no control of prices, if they are left free, in that case they will not have to pass through these ordeals, at least not through the expenditure which has to be incurred in passing through the hurdles, the loss that is incurred due to the Government acquiring a portion of that wheat, and the risk which a dealer has to take in order to sell the commodity in the market—at least those things will be eliminated. In that case if the price of wheat is Rs. 7 in the Punjab, I am quite sure it cannot be more than Rs. 10 in Calcutta and if the price in the Punjab is Rs. 10, in Calcutta it cannot be more than Rs. 12 or 13; but the position now is that while the price of wheat in the Punjab is Rs 7 per maund its price is Rs. 30 in Calcutta. And, Sir, this securing of wheat is a superhuman affair which no honest dealer would like to put up with. Then, Sir, take the case of coal. In Calcutta we find that it was selling at Rs. 5 or Rs. 6 per maund. Why was it so? Why did not the Government of Bengal take any steps in order to reduce its price by procuring the supply of coal which the Government are attempting now? I do not wish to lay much emphasis upon this problem which we have discussed for the last two days and which we may discuss on another day. What I wish to discuss today is that so far as the Government of Bengal is concerned it has failed in formulating a policy regarding food and in vigorously pursuing that policy in order to give relief to the people, and the people are entitled to demand of Government a solution of the problem and they are not inclined to give

any allowance for the difficulties which the Government may place before us. The one thing to be done is that Government should devise ways and means in order to provide us with food. It is the case of Midas starving in the midst of gold. India is an agricultural country and the shortage as estimated by the Food Minister of the Government of India does not justify the prices which are prevailing in this country. Government must now take all necessary steps in order to devise the ways and means to solve the problem.

Sir, I have got nothing more to say save and except to make a few more remarks with regard to certain other items of the Budget. We find that there is an increase of Rs. 48 lakhs under "Excise". This perhaps means that the habit of the people taking liquor has come to the rescue of the Government of Bengal by bringing in a receipt of Rs. 48 lakhs and Government must congratulate the "non-Bengali labourers, evacuees and camp-followers addicted to liquor" in the words of the Finance Minister for the timely help they have given to Government. I hope the Government will devise ways and means so that this may be forthcoming also in the present year in order to reduce the Budget deficit! But, Sir, this is a sad reflection upon the policy of prohibition to which the present Government stands pledged.

Then we find a drop of Rs. 40 lakhs in the estimated amount of Sales Tax. An explanation is now sought in the fact that the receipts have been very seriously affected by the reduction of private sales of building materials and imported goods. I say, Sir, if there has been a fall of income by a reduction of private sales of building materials and imported goods, there has also been a corresponding increase in the prices at which things have been sold. Therefore I do not accept that explanation. There will be no substantial improvement so far as the Sales Tax is concerned. Government ought to come forward with a proper explanation with regard to the drop in the Sales Tax. Then we find that in the present year under the head "Education" Rs. 10 lakhs less is spent and Rs. 10 lakhs less is also spent under "Public Health". This shows that the nation-building departments have suffered considerably at the present time. I hope Government will see that these departments do not suffer at all if even any improvement does not take place. Then we find that the Government have provided only Rs. 50 lakhs for the purchase of essential food supplies. This reminds me of the Government of Bengal purchasing 50,000 bales of jute in order to prevent the price from falling. Rs. 50 lakhs only for essential food supplies given to the Directorate of Civil Supplies—is it really tackling the problem? Rs. 50 lakhs is quite insufficient for the purpose on which we have embarked in order to solve the problem of supply to the people of this country.

We find that so far as the distribution is concerned, a guarantee has been given that most of the distributors will be impartial and businessmen. I hope that this expectation of the Hon'ble Minister will be fulfilled though the past does not justify any such assumption on our part. We know what kind of distributors and impartial businessmen have been appointed. People

have received permits, but they have not got finance. They were never engaged in business or trade and they are going out in order to sell their permits and obtain a financier in order to get finance. That is what we have seen. We do not know what Government are going to do with regard to distribution through trade tribunals, but I do hope that Government will exercise more care in giving these licences to the persons who are engaged in trade and commerce and who know trade and commerce and who are really impartial and businessmen and not give licences on the consideration of communal ratio or this ratio or that ratio. This problem should not be tackled in this way.

With these words, Sir, I conclude my speech.

Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am really at a loss to find how to speak on the budget today, as I have no time to go through it in detail. I shall not be able to make all my comments, but shall only present my chief and general comments on the budget which has been presented by one who, in the words of Mr. Griffiths used during the last session, is an old stalwart Minister of this province, is in charge of three portfolios, and who may be called the Chief Minister, the Home Minister and also the Minister for the Finance portfolio which has come to him because of the sudden resignation of the Leader of the Hindu Mahasabha, Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee. Dr. Mookerjee, in presenting his first and last budget on behalf of the Progressive Coalition Ministry, described it as a nation-saving budget which formerly used to be called a nation-building one. I characterise the present budget not as a nation-saving budget, but as a nation-killing budget. (Cries of "Hear, hear".) I will not make any elaborate criticism, but I will characterise the budget as a nation-killing budget deliberately, for obvious reasons particularly of lack of provision for what prevents the death of nation because it comes from one who was an acknowledged leader of the Muhammadan community of Bengal in the past and now an acknowledged greeted leader of the whole of Bengal. (A VOICE: Microphone please. We can't hear you.) I don't like microphone.

As I was saying, the budget has been presented by one who was the acknowledged leader of the Muhammadan community in the past, but now he is not only the acknowledged leader of the House but also the acknowledged leader of the whole of Bengal at least in the words of the Progressive Coalition Party members including the leader of the Hindu Mahasabha, Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee. If I am right he is the only one person in Bengal who can present a budget in spite of his heavy engagements in other directions, in spite of his carrying three portfolios. We know among ourselves that Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee belongs to the Education Department. He was not a financier of the Calcutta University and had nothing to do with finance, but he was nevertheless tried for the Finance portfolio, and although it was expected of him that he would perform a miracle, we did not find any miracle coming out of him, the explanation being that the budget was prepared in the course of two months and it was a legacy of the old Ministry.

Now the present budget has been prepared by, I should say, Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee who was the Finance Minister and the Hon'ble Mr. Fazlul Huq, the Home Minister, has got to bear the comments on this budget, though the budget was presumably under the supervision of Dr. Mookerjee. Really the comments should go partly to Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee who was the Finance Minister during the term and partly to Chief Minister who is now in charge of finance. I know Mr. Fazlul Huq for a long time. I know his ability and his wonderful capacity for invention though finance was never a good point in his life. He once told me while he was Education Minister that he was the only person who could move the machinery to the extent which nobody else could do. I expected this time he would move the machinery as Finance Minister to the utmost in the direction which would be useful to the people of his community and to the Scheduled Castes.

I find the budget, as it is presented, is a deficit budget. I do not complain. The Chief Minister is clever enough to disarm criticism by prefacing a long statement to his speech that there is a war near about. War has come nearer and there is always an expected invasion from Japan and these have made it necessary for him to provide for those extraordinary expenditures which are called extraordinary charges in this budget and which would not have been there but for this abnormal situation True it is that there is a war situation. We have got to provide for a comprehensive Civil Defence scheme, we have got to provide for air-raid precautions, we have got to provide for hundred other things which he has shown in his budget. Under the heads "Ways and Means Advance", "Civil Defence Advance", etc., he has provided Rs. 3 crores and odd. Apart from this Rs 3 crores and odd, in other respects I find in the receipts, viz., in the "Land Revenue" which is a fixed income there has not been any appreciable fall in the revenue receipts which amount to about Rs. 16 crores and a half.

With regard to "Extraordinary charges", they are charged on the Central Government and "Defence" practically goes to the Central Government; it is not a matter for the Provincial Government, but we have got to carry out their instructions and some portion of the expenditure we have got to bear.

Making allowance for all this there is no explanation for the fact as to why the ordinary normal life of the country, the normal budget of the province, namely, "Education", "Medical", "Public Health", should suffer so much as to deny the people the course in which they were so long pursuing their lives in different spheres. Under the head "Education" for which the present Finance Minister, that is to say, the Chief Minister was responsible for a long time what has been provided in the budget? He has not provided anything except what he has stated with regard to some grant of Rs. 8 lakhs to the District School Boards. He has also not provided anything for Secondary Education, worth the name. I am just reminded by a friend to my left that some provision has been made for the Chakhar College. I do not grudge that. The Chief Minister who was Education

Minister is a man who has served Bengal in his own way can be excused if he has never done something for his village. I do not grudge that, but at the same time his affection for his village ought to have led him also to have a little consideration for the villages of other members who have rendered services to Bengal perhaps not to the same extent as he has done or as he may claim to have done. This is so far as "Education" is concerned.

As regards "Medical Relief", we in this House are always told that medical help will be given adequately to Bengal. Malaria and other epidemics occur year by year and there is a very heavy toll on the population of Bengal. Even during this time of war malaria has broken out in an epidemic form throughout the province and difficulty has arisen on account of scarcity of quinine which is now prevailing in Bengal. Yet no provision for extra expenditure under this head has been provided in this budget. On the other hand I know that there is a scheme of distribution by the District Officers and that is negligible. That is also only on paper. So far as I know no quinine has yet been given to my district. The most essential medicine which is required for combating malaria is quinine and for that some extra provision ought to have been made for the supply of quinine to every dispensary in this budget. But I find none. So much for medical.

In the matter of "Public Health" I feel the less said the better. There is deterioration in health and there is also a reduction in grant. Now if you go on pushing with the war efforts or rather helping war efforts with the subvention that we get from the Government of India and if we deny to the people the essential medicine which will enable them to resist this scourge of malaria and do not care for the health of Bengal we or at least some of us are sure to be killed, if not by bombs, by epidemics that are prevailing every year in Bengal.

The nation-building departments, Medical Education and Public Health have been starved and they are suffering like that every year progressively.

With regard to "Irrigation" the less said the better. The only "Irrigation" item provided for is for the affected areas of Midnapore for embankments and nothing else has been done. Although there were commitments by the last Government and also by this Government no provision has been made in this budget for reviving dead and dying rivers and for improving the waterways of Eastern Bengal. This is the feature of the present budget.

The deficit in the budget as stated by the Chief Minister is Rs. 153 lakhs compared to Rs. 105 lakhs of last year. Of course it is a chronic deficit. I can account for it. But for this deficit the Chief Minister says he does not care. It is not possible for him to balance the budget. He does not intend to balance the budget. Still he would impose fresh taxation, a taxation which is called enhanced taxation which will yield only Rs. 33 lakhs, and for this Rs. 33 lakhs I do not understand why this enhanced taxation should be imposed as he does not propose to explain why this enhanced taxation is required. There is no explanation given. There is no reference to it in the speech which he has made in presenting the budget. It is really not understandable.

There is a provision which was running from last year with the advent of the new Ministry of one lakh for promoting communal harmony. I hear that Rs. 15,000 has been spent out of this; I do not know why this provision was made when it was not meant to be spent and how Rs. 15,000 has been spent. There is no explanation in the speech. People were very nervous that this one lakh would be spent for not promoting communal harmony but only bitterness. So an explanation ought to have been given on what item this Rs. 15,000 was spent. I do not like to say anything further on this. But I should say that if really the Ministry is anxious to promote communal amity or harmony they cannot do so by making a provision in the budget and keeping it as a show for the people. There cannot be any political unity unless there is a change of heart. With mere political unity we cannot go on. So I think that provision is absolutely out of place and ought never to have been made.

There are some amounts which are provided for in this budget which will not be spent as they were not spent last year. In the revised estimates there would have been some amount available for "Education", "Medical" and other necessary items in the budget.

The most important thing referred to by the previous speaker is the "Grow More Food" problem. There is a suggestion that they could have spent some amount on it but this amount is quite inadequate to meet the situation. The situation has become very acute on account of the scarcity of foodstuffs and on account of their inadequate supply. We have had some discussion on this subject the other day. The previous speaker has condemned price control and has suggested that the price control should be abolished. I do not agree with him fully. It is true, unless there is effective control it is better not to have any control at all. But from my experience I can say that under the present circumstances it is difficult to abolish the control system altogether and for effective control I should say that Government should set up adequate agencies in the mofussil and also in Calcutta to detect hoarders and speculators and persons who deal in black markets. There is no provision in the budget for setting up such agencies.

In conclusion I should like to say that the budget is really a gloomy budget. In spite of the very high hopes raised by the Chief Minister—at least I entertained very high hopes—I am disappointed and constrained to say that this budget is not worthy of the Chief Minister who has been so long in politics and who is in charge of three portfolios in this House.

Srijut ASHUTOSH MULLICK: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, সারা বিশ্বে যখন দারুণ দুর্যোগের দুর্দিন উপস্থিত হয়েছে চারিদিকে যুদ্ধভেরী বেজে উঠেছে, যুদ্ধ আর নেপথ্যের কোলাহল নয়, একেবারে রঙ্গমঞ্চে অভিনয় সুরু করে দিয়েছে স্বার্থের ঝঞ্ঝাবায়ু প্রবল গর্জনে চারিদিকে ঘুরপাক খেয়ে ফিরছে—ইংরাজের দমননীতির বিজয় রথ দুর্যুলকে ধূলির সহিত দলন কোরে ঘর্ঘর শব্দে দিক্‌বিদিক্ জ্ঞানশুন্য হোয়ে ধাবিত প্রধাবিত হচ্ছে তখন বাংলা সরকার বসভঙ্গ কোরে বাংলার পরিষদ গৃহে বাজেট প্রস্তাবের বহরটা জমাইবার চেষ্টা করবেন। অবশ্য এবারকার বাংলা সরকারের বাজেটকে যুদ্ধ বাজেট বলা

চলেনা—ইহা অভাবের বাজেট। এ বছর বাংলা সরকারের রাজকোষের চাবীকাঠি যার তার হাতে নয় একেবারে স্বয়ং কর্ত্তা প্রধান মন্ত্রী মহাশয়ের গলদেশে সবজন্তু সগৌরবে লম্বিত। ফলে লক্ষীছাড়া রাজকোষে মা লক্ষী বাড়ন্ত—আগামী বৎসর বাংলা সরকারের বাজেটে এককোটি ৫৩ লক্ষ টাকা ঘাটতি। কাজেই অধিকাংশ ভিখারীর ভাগ্যেই "এগিয়ে দেখ হাত জোড়া—কিন্তু কুটুম্ব বিশেষের বেলায় মুক্ত দ্বার মুক্ত হস্ত। জাতিগঠন মূলক অভিযান সমূহের ব্যয় সঙ্কোচ করে পুলিশের জন্য তথা যুদ্ধ ভাতার জন্য অধিকতর ব্যয় বরাদ্দ। কোন দেশের যখন দুর্গতির দিন আসে তখন সে মুখ্য উদ্দেশ্যকে হারায় গৌণটা জড়াল হইয়া জায়গা জুড়ে বসে, তখনও সে নানাবিধ বাঁধাবাঁধি নিয়ম মেনে চলে অথচ পরিণামের প্রতি লক্ষ্য থাকে না। বাংলা সরকারের বাজেট সৃষ্টি নহে, ইহা গড়ন—যে সৃজন করে তার ছাঁচ থাকে না আর যে গড়ে তার ছাঁচ চাই। আসল কথা এই যে বাংলা সরকারের বাজেট মন্ত্রী মহাশয়ের উর্ব্বর মস্তিষ্কের উদ্ভাবনী শক্তি প্রভাবে সৃষ্ট হয় নাই। কাজেই তাহা বৈচিত্র্যবিহীন। তাহাতে নূতনত্ব পুরাণার মরীচিকা। ইহা বুরোক্রেশীর ছাঁচে গড়া। যিনি গড়েন তিনি পরকে গড়েন সুতরাং তার একচুল এদিক ওদিক করবার ক্ষমতা নাই। ইহাদের কেবল কেরাণীগিরি করিতে হয় অনুস্বার বিন্দু-বিসর্গ নাড়াচাড়া করিতে ভরসা হয় না। যদিচ ঐ বিন্দু মহাসিন্ধুর ওপারে মহামহিমার্ণবের চাচিচল-আমেরীর রাজনৈতিক জ্যামিতির প্রতিপাদ্য বিষয় প্রমাণ জন্য—তথা ভাবতের রাজনৈতিক পরিস্থিতির জটিল সমস্যাপূরণের জন্য কাজে লাগতে পারে কিন্তু তাহা এই কৃষি প্রধান বঙ্গদেশে যেখানে সুবৃহৎ কৃষিক্ষেত্রের প্রয়োজন, সেখানে তার সার্থকতা কি?

বাংলাসরকারের বর্ত্তমান বাজেট আদৌ কালোপযোগী হয় নাই। বাংলার বাজেটের সহিত বাংলার জনসাধারণের কোন সম্পর্ক নাই। বীজ যদি বৃক্ষের সঙ্গে সম্পর্ক না রেখে অন্য উপায়ে ফললাভের আকাঙ্ক্ষা করে তবে সে ধরণাড়া কৃত্রিম ফল খেলার পক্ষে গৃহ সজ্জার পক্ষে অতি উত্তম হইতে পারে কিন্তু তাহা কাহারও যথার্থ ক্ষুন্নিবৃত্তির পক্ষে মোটেই উপযোগী নয়। বর্ত্তমানে বাংলাদেশে খাদ্য সমস্যাই আসল সমস্যা। অতএব মন্ত্রী মহাশয় আমাদের রাজার এক চোখ কানা বলে তাহার দৃষ্টি সম্পন্ন চোখের উপর পাগড়ী বেঁধে দিয়েছেন। বাজেটে ঐ সমস্যা সমাধানের কোন ব্যাপক পরিকল্পনা নাই। যিনি মানুষকে সন্তুষ্ট করিতে চাননা অথচ ইসলামের দোহাই দিয়া ধর্ম্মের দোহাই দিয়া কর্ত্তব্য সম্পাদনে ভগবানকে সন্তুষ্ট করতে চান মন্ত্রীত্বের পরিচ্ছদও তাঁহার মনোভাব গোপন করতে পারে না। আবার এমনও হইতে পারে এমন মানুষও দেখা যায় যাহাদের দেখিলে মনে হয় মানুষটা পোষাক পরে নাই পোষাকটাই মানুষকে প'রে বসিয়াছে। পোষাকে সে এমনি সমীহ করিয়া চলে যে তাহাকে দেখিলে মনে হয় আপনাকে সে পোষাক ঝুলাইবার আলনা মাত্র মনে করে। পোষাকের দামই তার দাম।

মন্ত্রী মহাশয় তাঁর বাজেট বক্তৃতায় অনেক কিছু কৈফিয়ৎ দিয়া তাঁহার বক্তব্য সমর্থন করিয়াছেন কিন্তু ভাঙ্গা হাটে আর হাঁড়ি ভেঙ্গে লাভ নেই। জ্বর বিকারের দুর্ব্বার উত্তেজনাকে স্বাস্থবানের বলপ্রকাশ বলা চলেনা। রোগী যদি শান্তি চায়—স্বাস্থ্য না চায় তবে সে শান্তিও পায় না স্বাস্থ্যও পায় না। তাঁর ঐ বক্তৃতার সমালোচনা যেন টাকের মাথায় চিরুনী চালাইবার চেষ্টা। মন্ত্রী মহাশয় জানাইয়াছেন নানাপ্রকার দায় ঘাড়ে পড়ায় বাংলা সরকারের আয় অপেক্ষা ব্যয় ভার বেড়ে গিয়াছে। কিন্তু ভার বাড়ে কখন না কেন্দ্রের দিকে ভারাকর্ষণ যখন বেশী হয়। যে হালকা জিনিষ আমরা সহজেই তুলছি যদি বৃহস্পতি গ্রহে যাই তবে সেখানে সেইটুকু জিনিষ আমাদের হাড় গুঁড়িয়ে দিতে পারে। Political প্রয়োজন ন্যায় বিবেকের চেয়েও নিজেকে বড় বোলে মনে করে। ইংরাজের সঙ্গে ন্যায্য অন্যায্য সর্ব্বপ্রকার সংঘাত স্থলে আমরা ন্যায়

বিচারের প্রত্যাশাই করিতে পারি না। যেখানে ভারত রক্ষা আইনের প্রয়োজনবশতঃ বাংলা সরকারের প্রেষ্টিজের দোহাই পড়ে সেখানে মন্ত্রী মহাশয় নিরুপায় অসহায়। অতএব তিনি সেখানে বিশ্ববিধাতার দোহাই মানেন নাই। তিনি সেখানে বাজেটের প্রকৃত স্বরূপ তার বীভৎস কুৎসিত আকৃতি গোপন করিবার জন্য নানা প্রকার যুক্তিতর্কের মুখোস পরাইয়া লজ্জা নিবারণের চেষ্টা করিবেন—"শাক দিয়া মাছ ঢাকিবার" চেষ্টা করবেন কিন্তু অবগুণ্ঠনের বহর বজায় রাখিতে গিয়া "এ ধারে ঝাঁপিতে তনু ওধারে উদাস"। আলোচ্য বর্ষের বাজেট ও জাতিগঠনমূলক শিক্ষা, জনস্বাস্থ্য এবং পূর্ত বিভাগের জন্য ব্যয় বরাদ্দ ও যুদ্ধ ভাতার ব্যয় বরাদ্দ পূর্ব বৎসর অপেক্ষা বাড়াইয়া দিয়াছেন। পুলিশ বিভাগের প্রতি অন্যায় এই পক্ষপাতিত্ব বাংলা সরকারের অপরিহার্য্য ও অবশ্য পালনীয় কৌলিন্য। যেহেতু শিক্ষা, স্বাস্থ্য এমন কি যথাসর্বস্ব বিনিময়েও কুল বজায় রাখিয়া অপাঙ্‌ক্তেয় বিভীষিকা এড়াইতে হইবে। কারণ বারুদে আগুন দেওয়া যতবড় অপরাধ ভিজা তুলায় আগুন দেওয়া তত বড় অপরাধ নহে।

বাংলা সরকারের রাজকোষের যুদ্ধ সংক্রান্ত ব্যয়ের অনেকাংশ ভারত সরকারেরই বহন করা ন্যায়সঙ্গত ও অবশ্য কর্তব্য যেহেতু বাংলা ভারতের পূর্ব সীমান্ত রক্ষা করিয়া ভারত রক্ষার সহায়তা করিতেছে সুতরাং বাংলা সরকারের দেয় এবং কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারের প্রাপ্য চারি কোটি টাকার ঋণ এমন কি পরিশোধ না করার দাবীও অন্যায় নহে। বরং ন্যায়তঃ বাংলা সরকার কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারের নিকট অর্থ সাহায্য দাবী করিতে পারেন। মন্ত্রী মহাশয় যে যে কারণ দর্শাইয়া বাজেটের ছাঁটি কাট করার প্রয়াস পাইয়াছেন তাহা সম্পূর্ণ অচল এবং সমর্থন করা কঠিন। যদিচ মন্ত্রী মহাশয় বাজেটের সমতা রক্ষার জন্য ব্যস্ত নন, অথচ এই অবস্থায় আবার নূতন কোরে টেক্স ধার্য্য করা কেন? করের হার বাড়াইয়া তিনি যে গভর্ণমেণ্টের আয় বৃদ্ধির চেষ্টা করিবেন তার বিশেষ সার্থকতা আছে বলে মনে হয় না। বিগত কয়েক বৎসর যাবত বাংলা সরকার একটি না একটি নূতন টেক্স বসাইয়া বাংলার জনসাধারণকে বোঝার উপর শাকের আঁটি কোরে অভ্যস্ত করাইয়া ফেলিয়াছেন। ফলে উহা ক্রমশঃ চিরস্থনী প্রথার সৃষ্টি করিয়াছে। কি জানি আগামী বৎসর অনভ্যস্ততা নিবন্ধন জনসাধারণের তরফ হইতে কোন প্রকার গুরুর আপত্তি ঘটে সেই ভয়ে যদি মন্ত্রী মহাশয় নূতন টেক্স ধার্য করে থাকেন তবে সে স্বতন্ত্র কথা। তা না হলে বাংলা সরকারের বিরাট ঘাটতির তুলনায় কর বৃদ্ধির আয় মাত্র ৩৩ লক্ষ টাকা সমুদ্রে বারি বিন্দুবৎ অতিশয় অকিঞ্চিৎকর ও অবাঞ্ছনীয়। উহা "যাহা" বাহান্ন তাঁহা তিপ্পান্নর দোহাই দিয়া উপেক্ষা করলে হয়ত চলত। বিশেষতঃ ইলেক্ট্রিসিটির উপর কর বাড়াইবার প্রস্তাব আদৌ যুক্তি সঙ্গত নয়। যেহেতু বর্তমানে কেরোসিন তৈলের অভাব অত্যন্ত বেশী তাছাড়া নানাবিধ শিল্পে বৈদ্যুতিক শক্তির ব্যবহার অপরিহার্য্য। তারপর আমোদ প্রমোদের উপর টেক্স ধার্য্যের প্রস্তাব যেন "মরার উপর খাঁড়ার ঘা"। লোকের নিত্য নৈমিত্তিক দুঃখ-দৈন্য, রোগ-শোক, জ্বালা-যন্ত্রনা ক্ষুৎ-ব্যাধি প্রভৃতি লইয়া দুর্বিসহ জীবন যাত্রার পথে কথঞ্চিৎ বিশ্রামের, ক্ষণিক উপশমের পক্ষে আমোদ প্রয়োজনীয়তা অত্যন্ত বেশী। কলিকাতায় বিগত বিমান আক্রমণের সময় যাঁরা এখানে উপস্থিত ছিলেন তাঁরা হয়ত তৎকালীন বোমাতঙ্ক প্রপীড়িত সহবতলীতেও আমোদ প্রমোদের আবাসস্থল থিয়েটার ও সিনেমা গৃহগুলিতে লোকারণ্য ও জনবহুলতা দেখে থাকবেন। অথচ ইহার উপর ক্রমশঃ টেক্স বসাইয়া ইহাকে ব্যয় বহুল করিবার চেষ্টা হচ্ছে। উপসংহারে আমার মন্ত্রী মহাশয়কে সনির্বন্ধ অনুরোধ তিনি যেন অন্ততঃ এই টেক্সটী বন্ধ করে তজ্জনিত আয় বৃদ্ধির সঙ্গে সঙ্গে তাঁর দুর্ণামের তালিকার কলেবর বৃদ্ধি না করেন।

Mr. J. N. GUPTA: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is a customary affair in a legislature to speak on the budget. I do not like to indulge in a long speech but I want to make some observations.

The budget introduced by the Hon'ble Finance Minister is not encouraging in any way. As a matter of fact expenditures showing increases are shown in lump sums so that the members may not understand the implication of framing the budget. Sir, it is really very discouraging. In the past budget we have seen expenditure in some detail and we understood it, but here it has been deliberately shown to avoid a discussion. I do not want to multiply instances for the purpose of criticising only but I want to say that in the matter of labour welfare Rs. 20,000 has been shown and actually Rs. 12,000 was spent in 1941-42. We do not knów for what purpose this amount has been spent and to whom it was given, whether the parties were deserving and the money had been properly utilised or not.

Then again, we find that in many cases it has been shown in lump sum. While examining past expenditure we find that under "Civil Works", "Industires", "Public Health", "Agriculture", money could not be spent for want of schemes. There had been several criticisms in the Public Accounts Committee meeting that in future proper schemes should be prepared before an estimate is placed before the legislature for sanction. I do not think that recommendation of the Public Accounts Committeee has been considered by the framer of this budget. I think the legislature has a right to demand of the Finance Minister to elucidate his statement when he presents the budget and I have no reason to doubt that in future the Finance Minister will come with such statement which will be easy for us to understand.

Mr. SERAJUL ISLAM: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is not an easy matter to deal adequately with the budget within such a short space of your hammering time-limit. I am, therefore, compelled to deal only with some salient and outstanding features of the budget.

Sir, a nation's annual budget must be illuminating and encouraging, giving new life to the dry bones; but as far as our budget is concerned I can very well say that it is disappointing. We should all remember that the eyes of the nation in general and of the teeming millions of the country-side in particular are fixed on this very vitally important national document but at last we see that every year—not only this year—we are disappointed. I perfectly remember that when we came to this House six years back we had to pass a budget of about 12 crores. This year we are going to pass a budget of 17 crores and more. Yes, we are ready to sanction this huge extra sum; but in return we expect to get something new to get on with newer vigour and energy and encouragement and hope. We know this is a war time budget and for the matter of that the budget can hardly be balanced, but, Sir, there is another side of the shield. During war time lots of our home industries could be easily helped and revived, but throughout the length and breadth of this budget we see no provision of the kind

that could give us even a ray of hope. Take for example, Sir, our handloom manufactures of the countryside. This industry could very well be helped in some way or other in these days of abnormally high prices of wearing cloth. Shoe is another instance which could be materially helped by Government.

This industry, Sir, came to our hands without recourse to any struggle or any movement like the Swadeshi movement which had to be launched for getting hold of the cloth industry of this country; but during the days of the last Great War this industry automatically came to our hands and thousands of our countrymen are living on this industry. But up till now Government have practically done nothing to help this industry. We expected that during this war time this industry would be sufficiently helped by taking steps to give them contracts for military, A. R. P. and civic guard requirements. The Department of Industries has got a great paraphernalia, but their attention is diverted otherwise. The department is busy with war supplies of such other things which have nothing to do with genuine traders and businessmen. We hope that from now these two major industries will find opportunities to avail themselves of the fruits of the war supplies.

Now, Sir, with regard to standard cloth For some time past we are tired of hearing many things about the standard cloth and we very legitimately expected that some definite statement will be made in the speech of the Finance Minister, but the Finance Minister has disappointed us.

Now, Sir, in presenting the budget the Finance Minister began with a most gloomy picture of the fall of Singapore and Burma which has cut us off, he says, from their fertile plains that have so far served as a reserve rice granary for our province and from the wells of which we drew the bulk of our oil for our lamps. True it is, but unfortunately we are not at all told as to how the close of the reserve rice granary and oil for our lamps can be compensated. That was our legitimate expectation, but on the contrary the Finance Minister has tried to take advantage of the situation in quite a different way, namely, by telling us as to how Government have got to face various other liabilities and difficulties on account of the situation. We have been told that on account of the enemy aggression our normal trade channels have been seriously disorganised and for the matter of that the Directorate of Civil Supplies has been formed for the welfare of the province throughout the coming year The news is palatable no doubt, but the Finance Minister is very careful in withholding from us the plan and line of action of this new department. Considering the huge expenditure that we are to sanction for this department and also the gigantic responsibilities of the department the very vague ideas given by the Finance Minister are not at all encouraging. We are told that a sum of Rs. 50 lakhs has been placed at the disposal of the Directorate for the purchase of foodstuffs, but we are surprised not to have been definitely told for what and for whom. We have heard in the meantime that there are places where there has been want of paddy and rice. Sir, I have got with me a letter just now received from a Government officer of a subdivisional town that there is

already a dearth of rice there and that even with money people cannot buy rice. But this news, I am afraid, has not reached the authorities here and very rightly Mr. David Hendry, Leader of the European Group, said the other day that at the present moment there is want of correspondence between the district authorities and the higher authorities here. I hope that there will be from now constant touch between these authorities so that such harrowing news may quickly reach them. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: You mean co-ordination?) Yes.

Now, Sir, we are told that we have to sanction Rs. 35 lakhs for the dearness allowance. Well and good. Government must help the low paid servants in these abnormal days. Government could do equally good for the poor tenants by reducing or by suspending the payment of their rents temporarily and by helping the landless labourers in the countryside by giving them paddy loans or the like. The Finance Minister ought to have made a declaration like this. Sir, the cases of landless labourers and tenants of small holdings in the countryside are uppermost in our minds. Government should at once give them some relief and a very considerable amount can be provided for the purpose by curtailment from other items. Rupees 17 lakhs has been allotted for the Home Guard organisation, Rs. 4½ lakhs for the Civic Guards. These Civic Guards and Home Guards practically do nothing. Let them be disbanded for one year at least and let the money be spent for the poorest section of our society. Besides, Rs. 8 lakhs which has been provided for the vagrant scheme should be utilised for this purpose by postponing the scheme for one year. Only the pious wishes of the Finance Minister that he will not tax the poorer classes to meet the deficit will not do. If he is sincerely anxious for them, let him so demonstrate his sincerity that these starving millions may feel it at once.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we expected that the Finance Minister would say something about the two items of the outgoing year's budget that were sanctioned last year—I mean Rs. 1 lakh for communal harmony and Rs. 78,000 for appointing Parliamentary Secretaries. Nothing has been done in this direction but why we cannot understand. God has, however, saved us so that there is no necessity for communal and parliamentary harmony in the coming year. War is indeed a very good healer.

Now, in the Education budget, we find that there has been a saving of about Rs. 15 lakhs under various heads and almost the whole of this amount has been budgeted for expenditure including a fat grant for the Chakar College which could be easily avoided. I think that a considerable portion of this saving may be utilised to give dearness allowances to the teachers of primary schools for whom only Rs. 3 lakhs has been estimated which is not at all sufficient for them. Town education, Sir, is sometimes discontinued during war time, but primary education in rural areas is being peacefully conducted by the primary teachers and for that they should be specially rewarded in these abnormal days.

Last but not least is the proposed additional taxation. In these hard days taxation of Rs. 33 lakhs on whosoever it may fall, will be very hard. If the Finance Minister can, as he tells us, knock at the door of the Central

Government for Rs. 119 lakhs, let him add to it the balance of the deficit, viz., Rs. 33 lakhs also for which he is going to fall upon a section of our people whoever they may be. Let there be peace in the country and let us hope that the coming year will be a normal year free from widespread natural calamities so that unnatural and awkward situation may be averted.

Dr. GOBINDA CHANDRA BHAWMIK: ডেপুটী স্পীকার স্যার—এবার বাজেটে যে ঘাটতি দেখতে পাচ্ছি তার দুটো কারণ হচ্ছে আজ ৩।।০ বছর পৃথিবীর উপর যুদ্ধ চলেছে এবং একটা প্রাকৃতিক দুর্যোগ যা কল্পনা করা যায় না আর যা এই বাংলাদেশে মেদিনীপুর এবং ২৪ পরগণার উপর ঘটে গেছে। ১৬ই অক্টোবর তারিখে যে তাণ্ডবলীলা মেদিনীপুর এবং ২৪ পরগণায় হয়েছে তা কল্পনা করা যায় না। এ রকম একটা ঘটনা ১৮৬৪ সালে হয়েছিল যখন ৩০ হাজার লোক মেদিনীপুরে বন্যায় মারা গিয়েছিল, এবং পরে কলেরা, Dysentery এবং অন্যান্য ব্যাপারে মারা গিয়েছিল। এবার ঐ দিন গভর্ণমেণ্টের মতে ১১ হাজার লোক মারা গেছে কিন্তু বাস্তবিক আমরা যা হিসাব কোরেছিলাম তাতে ৪০,০০০ লোক মারা গেছে। যে সময় বন্যা আসে তখন প্রায় সন্ধ্যা এবং সে সময় লোক সাবধান হতে পারে নি। বন্যা এবং ঝড় যে অঞ্চলে হয়েছে সেটা সমুদ্রের উপকূলবর্ত্তী স্থান। সেখানে denial policyর জন্য অনেক কিছু অসুবিধা হয়েছে, সেখান থেকে গত বছর মে মাসে সমস্ত বোট সরান হয়। এই দুর্যোগটা ১৬ই তারিখে হয়েছিল আমরা ১৮ই তারিখে খবরের কাগজে বার করবার জন্য চেষ্টা করেছিলাম কিন্তু দুঃখের বিষয় তা হয় নি এবং আপনারা সে সম্বন্ধে পূর্ব্বে শুনেছেন। সেই দুর্যোগে যা ক্ষতি হয়েছে সারা মেদিনীপুর জেলার এবং ২৪ পরগণার তা কল্পনা করা যায় না। সেখানকার অবস্থা অত্যন্ত খারাপ হয়ে গেছে। লোকের ঘরে যা ধান এবং উদ্বৃত্ত ফসল ছিল সব নষ্ট হয়ে গেছে। গভর্ণমেণ্ট সেখানে কিছু দিন রিলিফ্ দিয়েছিলেন। রিলিফ্ প্রথমে পৌছায়নি, নবেম্বর মাসের মাঝামাঝি প্রায় ১ মাস পরে রিলিফ্ পৌছায়, এবং সম্প্রতি gratuitous relief প্রায় বন্ধ করা হয়েছে। ফলে সেখানে অধিকাংশ লোক খেতে পাচ্ছে না। কোথাও কুঁড়ো কোথাও বা শাক সবজী খেয়ে আছে। যার অবস্থা ভাল সে হয় ত দু বেলা খায়। শতকরা দশ জন হয়ত এই রকম আঘাত করা প্রায় ৩০ জন এক বেলা খেতে পায়, আর একদিন অন্তর বাকী লোক। তারা ছোলা সিদ্ধ কোরে খায়। বাজারে ছোলার দাম সস্তা এবং অল্প পরিমাণে ছোলা খেলে পেট ভরে বোলে কোন কোন অঞ্চলে লোক বন্যার পরে এক বেলা ছোলা, এক বেলা ভাত, কোথাও বা এক দিন অন্তর ছোলা ভাত খেয়ে কাটাচ্ছে। আজকে এই সমস্যায় বাংলার বাজেটে অনেক বিপর্য্যয় ঘটেছে। এই ঝড়ের জন্য সেখানে একশ মাইলের উপর বাঁধ ভেঙ্গে গেছে, যদি সেই বাঁধ মেরামত না হয় তাহলে আসছে বছর সেখানে চাষ হবে না, এবং যেখানে যে কটা লোক বেঁচে থাকবে তারা খেতে পাবে না এবং এই প্রাদেশিক গভর্ণমেণ্টের যা রেভেনিউ আসত আসবে না। এ বছর রেভিনিউ পাবার সম্ভাবনা নাই এবং আসছে বছরও পাবার সম্ভাবনা নাই, এ বছর deficit budget হয়েছে ৩০ লক্ষ টাকার। যদি সত্যকার test relief work করা যায় তাহলে এই ৩০ লক্ষ টাকার সব লেগে যাবে বলতেই হয়। Relief operationএর জন্য গভর্ণমেণ্ট যে ৬০ লক্ষ টাকা ধরেছেন তাতে প্রায় ২৫ লক্ষ লোকের জন্য বস্ত্রের যদি সমাধান করতে হয় তাহলে ৬০ লক্ষ টাকা সমাক নয়। ৭০ লক্ষ টাকা agriculture loan ধরা হয়েছে। সেখানে প্রায় ১ লক্ষ গরু মরে গেছে আজকে সেখানে গরু যদি বাহির থেকে না আসে তাহলে হয়ত চাষ হবে না। তা ছাড়া লোকের বীজ চাই, বীজ না হলে ধান চাষ করতে পারবে না।

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Sir, may I draw your attention to the fact that the Hon'ble Finance Minister is not in the House?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Hon'ble Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmed and the Hon'ble Mr. Upendra Nath Barman are here taking notes, and the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee is also here.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: My friend, Dr. Bhowmik, is addressing the House on the question of relief to Midnapore and I am here. My honourable friend knows that the responsibility of the Ministry is joint and several.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: In which respect is the responsibility of the present Ministry joint and in which respect several?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I cannot allow that question now.

Dr. GOBINDA CHANDRA BHAWMIK: যেখানে ২৫ লক্ষ লোক আক্রান্ত, যেখানে তাদের চাষ ভিন্ন জীবন রক্ষার কোন সম্ভাবনা নাই, সেখানে এই যে loan যেটা গভর্ণমেণ্ট ফিরিয়ে পাবার আশা রাখেন সেটা আরও বাড়িয়ে দিতে গভর্ণমেণ্টকে অনুরোধ করি। Test relief workএর জন্য communication ডিপার্টমেণ্ট থেকে ৫০ লক্ষ টাকা ধরা হয়েছে, এই ৫০ লক্ষ টাকা যাতে সদ্ব্যবহার হয় যাতে ওখানকার লোকেরা পায় এবং তাদের বেঁচে থাকবার মত অবস্থা আসে তার জন্য ব্যবস্থা করুন। অবশ্য এটা ঠিক যে মেদিনীপুরের দুর্যোগ সমস্ত বাংলা দেশের বেডিনিউকে আক্রমণ করেছে কিন্তু এটা মেদিনীপুরের দোষ নয়, এ প্রাকৃতিক দুর্যোগ। এ রকম অবস্থা যদি অন্যান্য জায়গায় হয় তাহলেও বাংলা গভর্ণমেণ্টকে তাদের রক্ষা করবার জন্য চেষ্টা করতে হবে। আজকে যে অবস্থা এসেছে আপনারা যদি বাংলা গভর্ণমেণ্ট থেকে তাদের রক্ষা করবার ব্যবস্থা না করেন তাহলে কিছুতেই তারা রক্ষা পেতে পারে না।

আর একটা কথা বলতে চাই Civil Supply Directorate সম্বন্ধে গভর্ণমেণ্ট ৫০ লক্ষ টাকা তাদের জন্য বরাদ্দ করেছেন, তার দ্বারা ধান বা অন্যান্য food grain কিনতে পারবেন। এদের reliefএর জন্য এখনও ধান কেনা হয় নি এবং বাহির থেকে যদি Civil Supply Department ধান না নিয়ে আসেন এবং সেখানকার লোককে সুবিধায় বিক্রী না করেন তাহলে সেখানকার লোকদের বাঁচবার কোন উপায় নাই। এখন যে ভাবে Civil Supply Directorate চলেছেন তা ওখানকার উপযোগী নয়, কারণ গত ডিসেম্বর মাসে মেদিনীপুর জেলার এক রেলওয়ে ষ্টেশন থেকে প্রায় ৫০ হাজার মণ ধান অন্যান্য জায়গায় নিয়ে গেছেন। আজ বাংলায় খাদ্য সমস্যা, শুধু মেদিনীপুরে নয়, এটা সমস্ত জেলার। আজকার দিনে, গভর্ণমেণ্ট বা মন্ত্রিসভা বা এসেম্বলির সকলকে বলব যে যদি একযোগে এই সমস্যা সমাধান করতে না পারেন তাহলে আমরা যারা এসেছি দেশের প্রতিনিধি হয়ে আমাদের constituencyর কাছে মুখ দেখান কঠিন হবে। প্রত্যেক জেলাতেই এইটি বড় সমস্যা। কাজেই Civil Supply Directorate যাতে Legislatureএর অধীন হতে পারে যাতে member দের একটা effective voice থাকে তার জন্য সকলে চেষ্টা করুন। কারণ এটা যদি না করতে পারেন তাহলে সামনের দিকে অবস্থা আরও খারাপ দাড়াবে এবং খারাপ হলে যেমন মন্ত্রিপক্ষের লোকের দায়িত্ব রয়েছে তেমনি বিরুদ্ধ দলেরও দায়িত্ব রয়েছে, কারণ এ Legislature ভাগাভাগি নয়। সেই জন্য এই ভাবী সমস্যার দিকে সকলের লক্ষ্য করা উচিত এবং গভর্ণমেণ্টের

এই যে Civil Supply Directorate রয়েছে বা যেটা হয়েছে এতে আমাদের কথা বলবার সুযোগ থাকা উচিত। গভর্ণমেণ্ট এই যে ধান কেনবার যে নীতি প্রবর্ত্তন করেছেন সেই নীতি যদি সম্যকভাবে পরিচালিত না হয় তাহলে খাদ্য সমস্যার সমাধান হবে না। Civil Supply Directorateএর মধ্যে এইটাই সব চেয়ে বড় সমস্যা আর এটা শুধু বাংলা দেশের সমস্যা। কাজেই এখানে যাতে এমন কিছু একটা ব্যবস্থা করা হয় যাতে দেশের মধ্যে যে সব ধান চাল আছে তা ঠিকমত লোক পায়, rationing হিসাবে লোক খেতে পায় এবং বেঁচে থাকতে পারে এমন একটা ব্যবস্থা হওয়া উচিত।

তারপর Political Headএ Police Budgetএ যা ধরা হয়েছে তাতে টাকা উদ্বৃত্ত ধরা হয়েছে। মেদিনীপুর জেলার মধ্যে sabotage movement হয়েছিল সেকথা আপনারা সকলে শুনেছেন। আমি পুনরুক্তি করতে চাই না। তবে আমি এই অভিযোগ করি যে সেখানে পুলিশ অনেক excess করেছে। প্রত্যেক জায়গায় sabotage movement করা হয়েছে, ভারতবর্ষের যেখানেই বিক্ষুব্ধ ভাব এসেছিল এবং কংগ্রেসের লোকদের বন্দী করা হয়েছিল আর এই ব্যাপারে মেদিনীপুরও বাদ যায়নি। সেখানে sabotage movement হয়েছিল ঠিক কিন্তু সেটা কমাবার জন্য গভর্ণমেণ্ট যে সব অপকর্ম্ম করেছেন, যেসব step নিয়েছেন আমি সেটা সম্যক অনুমোদন করিনা। কারণ সেখানে violence করা হয়েছে, অনেক নির্দ্দোষী লোক মারা গেছে এমন ব্যাপক assault করা হয়েছে, যে গ্রামকে গ্রাম ঘেরাও কোরে লোককে মারা হয়েছে, অনেক নিরপরাধী লোককে আটকে রাখা হয়েছে আর adjournment motionএ শুনেছেন যে মেয়ে লোকদের মর্য্যাদা রক্ষা করা হয় নি, আর সেটা ব্যাপক ভাবে হয়েছে, এবং সেইটাই সব চেয়ে দুঃখের বিষয়। Nazism Fascismএর দেশেও এরূপ ঘটনা ঘটেছে কিনা সন্দেহ। পুলিশের বা মিলিটারীর যা অত্যাচার সেখানে হয়েছে তা অত্যন্ত নোংরা। তার প্রতিবিধান যদি না করেন তাহলে এখানকার লোকের আস্থা গভর্ণমেণ্টের উপর থাকতে পারে না।

এ ছাড়া Jail এবং convictsএর ব্যবস্থা ভাল হয়নি, এক মেদিনীপুর জেলায় প্রায় ২॥ হাজার ও ৩ হাজার লোককে ধরা হয়েছে, তাদের ৪।৫ মাস ধ'রে বিচারই হয়নি, তাদের অনেককে যে জায়গায় রাখা হয় তার capacity ছোট এবং তা কুৎসিত তাদের খাদ্য দ্রব্য খারাপ দেওয়া হয় এবং সে সম্বন্ধে অনেক অভিযোগ আছে। আমি পরে সে গুলো আপনাদের জানাতে পারি।

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Sir, I cannot congratulate the Hon'ble Finance Minister for his budget as presented before the House for the patent and simple reason that he has treated the nation-building departments with step-motherly considerations.

Sir, I want to deal first with the receipts side. In the year 1942-43 we find that the Government has got a windfall of Rs. 39 lakhs from income-tax and of Rs. 48 lakhs from excise. But in the current year's budget there has been an excess in the receipts under excise which has got to be condemned. At this time when so much has been spoken of prohibition and specially when the budget has been prepared under the regime of Krishak Praja *cum* Forward Bloc Coalition who always advocated prohibition, this excess of revenue under excise is rather amusing. This apparent guilt on the part of Government is attempted to be explained by the Hon'ble

Finance Minister by the fact that there was an influx of a large number of non-Bengali labourers, evacuees and camp-followers addicted to liquor. May we ask in all humility to the members of this House whether non-Bengali labourers, evacuees and camp-followers can be encouraged and should be encouraged in this bad habit? It is a proof that the present Ministry is definitely against prohibition and is giving a decent burial to the policy of prohibition adopted by the last Ministry. The Krishak Praja *cum* Forward Bloc members were all along vociferous when the question of prohibition came up before the Legislature during the last Ministry. But now we find, when they are in power, they are quite silent and their vociferousness has disappeared.

Sir, I now come to the nation-building departments. If we turn to Education, we find there on page 58 of the Red Book that the Government surrendered 10 lakhs of rupees which was earmarked for primary education due to the fact that many of the district school boards had large accumulated balance. Sir, as a member of the Mymensingh District School Board I can say that in 1941-42 the grant to that Board was Rs. 3,60,000; but in 1942-43 the grant has been reduced to Rs. 1,90,000, of which Rs. 1,13,000 has been earmarked for dearness allowance to teachers. This fact which has been stated by the Hon'ble the Chief Minister in the budget is entirely a misrepresentation. We cannot push up many of the desirable schemes only for want of funds, and in the present year in the District School Board of Mymensingh, so far as the balance is concerned, it has been entirely consumed. We do not know where we stand. We have been pressing for 100 more schools during the last two years, but Government did not sanction them. We cannot repair the school buildings for want of funds. But the Government say that they have surrendered 10 lakhs of rupees because the district school boards have large accumulated funds. It is entirely a false statement and misrepresentation.

Sir, there is another item. You will find Rs. 1,11,000 which was earmarked for the training of the primary school teachers has also been surrendered because no new training centres have been opened. There is no explanation for this. May I take it that due to war emergencies these centres could not be opened? What is the reason for not opening centres and surrendering this sum of Rs. 1,11,000? If you look to item 5, you will find that Rs. 64,000 which was earmarked for adult education, has been surrendered. What is the reason? Government estimated this expenditure in 1942-43 but they have surrendered this amount for want of a scheme. You will also find that so far as primary education is concerned, in this year's budget they have allotted eight lakhs of rupees, of which three lakhs has been earmarked for dearness allowance. I do not grudge it, for it is not sufficient. Five lakhs of rupees has been allotted for the whole of the province where not less than 12 cess-paying district school boards exist. It is a drop in the ocean. So I think this grant of eight lakhs should be augmented to something like 20 lakhs because in the district of Mymensingh itself we require not less than five lakhs of rupees in the current year and in the year to come. If we turn to page 90 of the budget we find that the

Government of Bengal wanted one crore of rupees as loan for the jute-growers, but they bungled. The entire quantity of jute was sold at the time at Rs. 2 or Rs. 3 per maund and Government have secured one crore of rupees from the Central Government when all the jute passed out of the hands of the cultivators, and it was then the middleman who was dealing in jute. And Government stated that out of the one crore which they had borrowed from the Centre they spent only six lakhs of rupees. Why? Because they took the money at a time when there was no necessity.

Now, Sir, this amount they want to pay back to the Centre. May I suggest that this amount which the Provincial Government borrowed may be utilised for the spread of primary education which is a crying need of the country and for which all sections of the people are equally unanimous.

Sir, there is another item. Everybody knows that there is no credit in the country and people are not getting any money, but here we find that in the year 1942-43 Rs 60 lakhs were provided as a short-term loan to agriculturists through co-operative societies and this year also they have provided an amount. But I think that amount is not at all sufficient and it should be increased in view of the fact that people are not getting any help anywhere. And to our utter astonishment we find that for financing Co-operative Land Mortgage Banks, Government have in 1942-43 provided Rs. 7 lakhs, while the present progressive Ministry have provided only Rs. 3½ lakhs this year. Sir, members will remember that so far as these Land Mortgage Banks are concerned, everybody knows that people are anxious to have loans from these Land Mortgage Banks. But instead of increasing the provision under this head they have decreased it—they have practically halved it, from Rs. 7 lakhs they have decreased it to Rs. 3½ lakhs. I do not know why this has been done.

Sir, in respect of another item—advances to Collectors for removal of water-hyacinth—they have provided only Rs 50,000 for this purpose. There are as many as 28 districts in Bengal and Rs. 50,000 means less than Rs. 2,000 per district. In a district like Mymensingh I think, not to speak of Rs. 2,000, even Rs. 1 lakh may not suffice. But Government have provided only Rs. 50,000 for the purpose.

I now pass on to Public Health. Government have surrendered Rs. 10 lakhs under this head because they say that the water-supply scheme could not be pushed through for want of tubes. Sir, if we look to the figures provided in the budget we find that only Rs. 2½ lakhs has been provided for water-supply, but they have surrendered Rs. 10 lakhs. Still the explanation is that for want of tubes they had to surrender this amount.

Sir, if we turn to the question of free distribution of quinine, we find that in the budget estimate of 1942-43, Rs. 6 lakhs was provided while this year the provision is Rs. 5½ lakhs. So we take it that the dearth of quinine has disappeared. Sir, in answer to a question the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Excise replied that Government quinine was sold at Rs. 18 previous to the war and it was now being sold at Rs. 25-8, while in the countryside even at Rs. 250 per pound it is not available. Now they have

provided only Rs. 5¼ lakhs though in the budget estimate for 1942-43 the amount was Rs. 6 lakhs. In the district of Mymensingh alone the death rate is mounting to an extent which is unprecedented in the history of the district of Mymensingh and no quinine is available and still they have provided Rs. 50,000 less than the budget estimate for 1942-43.

For Anti-Malarial Scheme we find that in 1942-43 Rs. 2,60,000 was provided, but this year they have provided only Rs 2 lakhs. Is it due to the fact that malaria has disappeared from the land? This is the way in which they have treated the nation-building departments.

As regards Agriculture, they have launched a scheme of "Grow More Food" and they have provided Rs. 18,75,000 for the year 1942-43. In that department they have proposed for the extended use of departmental paddy seeds, but I am constrained to say that I wrote to the Director of Agriculture for *aus* paddy seed but there was no reply, and from my personal experience I can tell the House that in my own subdivision of Kishoreganj people consumed all their *aus* seeds because they had nothing to fall upon, and unless Government supply *aus* paddy seed their lands will remain fallow, but in spite of repeated correspondence with the Director of Agriculture I had no reply. This is the way in which they are regulating the scheme of the "Grow More Food."

They have said that they will provide seeds of mustard, lentil and paddy. I personally wrote to the Director of Agriculture but no seeds were supplied, nor did he reply whether seeds would be available. If they bungle things in this way I do not know how it will be possible for them to supply seeds and to carry on the "Grow More Food" campaign.

Sir, so far as Civil Works is concerned they have surrendered Rs. 44 lakhs on the ground that materials were not available. Sir, we find that for a climatic sanatorium for tuberculosis a provision of Rs. 1 lakh was made, but this year they have not provided anything. I think that the climatic sanatorium for which there was a unanimous demand has been abandoned and no reason has been assigned why this has been done.

In the Medical Department also there is a non-utilisation in full of Rs. 2 lakhs which had been provided for the improvement of sadar hospitals. This is one of the most important items under the Medical head, but Rs 2 lakhs has not been utilised and that had been surrendered. This shows that the Ministry have got absolutely no scheme whatsoever.

Sir, they have provided Rs. 2,73,000 this year for Civic Guard organisation, but in our countryside we have not heard of the scheme. This scheme exists only on paper. In villages we do not find any Civic Guard organisation, but we find that a large sum has been allotted for the organisation of Civic Guards. We do not know how Government spend this huge sum though practically there is no existence of this organisation in villages.

Sir, under "General Administration" we find that though Rs. 1 lakh was provided for communal harmony, only Rs. 15,000 has been utilised and the Chief Minister or the Finance Minister has not been good enough

to enlighten us as to the way in which this Rs. 15,000 has been spent though there was a chorus of demand in the last session. The Finance Minister gave an undertaking that so far as communal harmony money was concerned, even a farthing would not be spent without a scheme, but there is no reference to any scheme and Rs. 15,000 has been spent. Many suggested that money provided last year would be spent for propaganda purposes of the Progressive Coalition Party. May we take it that it has been spent for that purpose? May we know from the Hon'ble Finance Minister how he spent this money and where? Rs. 1,18,000 for rural reconstruction which is one of the most important items in the nation-building work has been surrendered for want of any scheme. May we know why this amount has been surrendered? There was a discretionary grant of Rs. 1,73,000 to the District Officers for rural reconstruction. That has also been surrendered for want of any scheme. May we know why these big sums, namely, Rs 1,18,000 and Rs 1,76,000 were provided in the budget for rural reconstruction and not a single farthing was spent and the Finance Minister does not give us any explanation why these sums were surrendered.

Sir, under the head "General Administration" we find increased provision for District Officers and Establishment owing mainly to the provision of 158 officers recruited into the B.J.C.S. cadre. Here there was a genuine grievance that these officers ought not to have been recruited in the way that they have been done. They ought to have been recruited by the Public Service Commission. One hundred and fifty-eight officers have been recruited, but it is a pity that the Public Service Commission had not been consulted. This is a serious breach in the laws of the country. I think that the Hon'ble Finance Minister, who is also the Home Minister, should have given a sufficient explanation for this departure from the established custom of the country, but he has absolutely no explanation whatever to offer. Therefore, Sir, he has not come out with any explanation for this departure from the ordinary and normal procedure in the country.

Then, Sir, there is also surrender for non-appointment of Parliamentary Secretaries. May I ask the Hon'ble Finance Minister and Home Minister why this sum was provided and during whole one year they could not come to any decision with regard to the appointment of Parliamentary Secretaries and the amount had to be surrendered.

Adjournment.

The House was then adjourned at 12-8 p.m. till 3-45 p.m. on Monday, the 22nd February, 1943, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the Provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Monday, the 22nd February, 1943, at 3-45 p.m.

Present:

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. SYED JALALUDDIN HASHEMY) in the Chair, 7 Hon'ble Ministers and 187 members.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Problems of Small Industries in Bengal.

***55. Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH SEN:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce, Labour and Industries Department be pleased to state whether he is aware of the difficulties and war-time problems which the large number of small and middle-sized industries are facing?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps, if any, Government propose to take in the matter?

Mrs. HASINA MURSHED (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja Habibullah Bahadur, of Dacca): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) Every effort has been and is being made by the Director of Industries in collaboration with appropriate authorities for removal of difficulties whenever these have been brought to his notice. A statement showing the action so far taken in individual cases is laid on the Library Table.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Parliamentary Secretary be pleased to state what has been the action taken by the person or the authorities to whom Government referred the individual cases?

Mr. K. NOORUDDIN: Sir, is the Honble Nawab Bahadur still seriously ill?

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: What is the trouble with him, Sir?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have received today also a letter from him saying that he is lying ill.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: He is still seen frequenting cinema houses, but it seems he cannot come to the House.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The Assembly is not a cinema house.

Mrs. HASINA MURSHED: Will the honourable member kindly repeat his question?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: From a perusal of the statement laid on the library table it appears that the Department of Industries has simply forwarded letters asking them to give help to appropriate authorities, sometimes to the Controller and sometimes to other departmens, but no mention has been made as to what action has been taken on these petitions.

Mrs. HASINA MURSHED: Government are not in a position to give any detailed information with regard to the action taken, but the action taken by this Government is already indicated in the statement laid on the library table.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: That is not indicated there

Mrs. HASINA MURSHED: The statement shows the action taken by this Government which have recommended these petitions to various departments, Controller and the like, but so far as Government gather most of the firms have been benefited.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Padiamentary Secretary be pleased to let us know what steps have been taken in securing coal supply for the small and middle-sized industries?

Mrs. HASINA MURSHED: This question does not come within the scope of the question.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: The question is, "Will the Hon'ble Minister concerned be pleased to state whether he is aware of the difficulties and war time problems which the large number of small and middle-sized industries are facing"?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The answer is in the affirmative.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I am putting a specific question out of the general, namely, about the coal supply which is one of the many items in which difficulties are being experienced

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: What is the question, Sir?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: What steps have Government taken to ensure a steady supply of steam coal for the small and middle-sized industries? I shall submit why I put this question.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir.——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: May I complete the question? The present position is that the Controller of Coal Distribution whose office is at No. 1, Council House Street, decides the question of priority of wagon supply for large industries. Large industrial establishments get the priority from him. The Civil Supply Directorate, on the recommendation

of the District Magistrates concerned, allot priority wagons for smaller industries. So far as the Civil Supply Directorate is concerned they have not yet been able to secure——

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: What do you want to know?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I want the Hon'ble Chief Minister to let the House know whether Government have done anything to ensure a steady supply of coal.

Mrs. HASINA MURSHED: The honourable member's question relates to coal, and I must say that that question does not come within the scope of this question

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: In his statement Dr. Sanyal has asked what steps have Government taken in regard to this particular matter. The question of coal along with the question of foodstuffs has been a matter of great anxiety not only to us but to everybody else. So far as coal is concerned——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: That is domestic coal for fuel purposes.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Yes.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: My question is not that. My question relates to steam coal.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Both stand on the same footing. So far as the coal supply is concerned I can tell the House that it was decided at one time that there was abundant coal of all kinds available for Bengal. The only difficulty was transport. Mr. Ayyar, who, as you know, has been put on duty in connection with transport arranged for transport and for some time the arrangement was successful. The inconvenience to which Dr. Sanyal has referred is, I admit, a very real one, and I would suggest that the proposal that Dr. Sanyal seems to have hinted at in the course of his statement is a proposal which is worth considering. May I suggest that he may please see Mr. Ayyar tomorrow or at his convenience and suggest to him the means of getting over this difficulty? Our difficulty has been that some officers are located somewhere and some other officers are located at other places. The staff for carrying out the decisions of various officers are separated also by being located in different places. Now considerable time has elapsed and lot of inconvenience has been caused to the public as a result of lots of difficulties. If there is a way out Government would be perfectly prepared to accept that, provided that some practical suggestions are given. I suggest that if Dr. Sanyal would do us the favour of seeing Mr. Ayyar, Government would then most sympathetically consider his suggestions

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble the Chief Minister be pleased to say if he is aware that the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce in collaboration with other Chambers representing Indian commercial communities have already represented to the Controller that they were

prepared to organise the small industries and to arrange for the distribution of steam coal for small industries? In this connection I may inform the Hon'ble the Chief Minister that it is not Mr. Ayyar who deals with this thing but it is Mr. Aziz Ahmed, the Deputy Director of Civil Supplies; this subject is being dealt with in the office of Civil Supplies.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am not aware of what Dr. Sanyal has said. If that be so, it is an important matter which I am sure the Deputy Director is looking into.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Whom shall I address my question, Sir?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You should address Government

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Government be pleased to state whether they are aware of the fact that country weavers cannot proceed with their loom work for want of thread of 30 and 40 counts?

Mrs. HASINA MURSHED: I think the answer is in the affirmative.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Parliamentary Secretary be pleased to state what are the difficulties referred to in question (*a*) to which answer "yes" is given?

Mrs. HASINA MURSHED: I ask for notice.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Parliamentary Secretary be pleased to state if she has already repudiated that the question of coal supply is not one of the difficulties mentioned?

Mrs. HASINA MURSHED: I did not repudiate, but I said that "it does not come within the purview of this question".

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is the Parliamentary Secretary aware that the supply of coal and of other materials and chemicals as also transportation are among the principal difficulties experienced by small industries?

Mrs. HASINA MURSHED: Yes, but no mention has been made about coal in the question.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, the Parliamentary Secretary has only been reading from the printed reply and, as is often the case, Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries do not go into the files and do not come prepared to answer supplementary questions.

Mrs. HASINA MURSHED: Sir, I am not concerned with coal so far as this question is concerned, and therefore I cannot give any answer.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Sir, the Agriculture Minister is absent and there are many questions which concern the Department of Agriculture and Industries. I suggest that those questions be held over until his return.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have arranged that all the held-over questions will be taken up tomorrow, and I will include this question with the rest. I cannot wait till eternity for the held-over questions to be replied to and have arranged that these questions should be all taken up tomorrow.

Mrs. HASINA MURSHED: As the Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur is ill, I am prepared to answer all his questions.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It has been decided to take them up tomorrow.

Security prisoners in Bengal.

*56. **Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the total number of security prisoners in Bengal up to the end of the month of December, 1942; and

(*ii*) the amount of money that the Government spends per head of those security prisoners?

(*b*) Is the Government considering the desirability of releasing all those security prisoners who are being detained without any trial?

MINISTER in charge of the HOME DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq): (*a*) (*i*) (1) Political security prisoners—1,540.

(2) Criminal security prisoners—2,255.

(*ii*) It is impossible to calculate the amount accurately. The averages for the two classes are roughly as follows:—

(1) Rs.690 per annum per prisoner.

(2) Rs.178 per annum per prisoner.

These figures do not include the expenditure on family allowance.

(*b*) The desirability of releasing prisoners detained without trial is constantly under consideration of Government and orders of release in suitable cases are being and will continue to be issued from time to time. About 250 security prisoners have already been released in this manner.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: In view of the fact that the price of every necessity of life has increased abnormally, will the Government be pleased to state if they consider or think it proper to increase the allowance of the security prisoners in jail or in detention anywhere?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The question of the abnormal rise in the prices of foodstuffs has been taken into consideration and in many cases the allowances granted previously have been increased.

Mr. SYED ABUL MAJID: Will the Hon'ble the Chief Minister be pleased to state if family allowance is given to every security prisoner?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: No, Sir.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when these allowances were increased?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: As regards family allowance——

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Sir, my question is about allowances to security prisoners themselves and not about allowances to their families.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Well, Sir, I will deal with these two kinds of allowances separately. Family allowance is given when it is found that the detention of any person as a security prisoner has told seriously on the sources of income of the family and in the judgment of Government it is necessary to supplement the depleted income by granting family allowance to the members of that family. In the case of allowances to members themselves it is decided on the status of the prisoner's previous earning before his arrest and also other particulars which have got to be taken into consideration before deciding what allowances would be suitable in these cases.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Sir, that was not my question. My question was, when were their allowances increased?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: They are being increased as soon as they are coming up to Government for consideration.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: With reference to answer (*a*) (*iii*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether these amounts include clothing and other expenditure in addition to dietary expenditure?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: No.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the number after consideration of which about 250 security prisoners were released?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: It is impossible for me to give the answer off-hand, but if the honourable member wants that information I can supply him with that later on

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state, in the face of the reply that he had given just a minute before that this Rs. 690 or Rs. 178 does not include clothings and other things, what does it include?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That is for maintenance and out-of-pocket expenses.

Babu PREMHARI BARMA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what has been the increase in the diet allowance of the security prisoners and when?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Formerly the allowance was 9 annas per head, and it has been increased by the present Government to 12 annas and 6 pies per head.

Babu NARENDRA NARAYAN CHAKRABARTY: মাননীয় মন্ত্রী মহাশয় কি একথা স্বীকার করবেন যে সময়ে নয় আনা থেকে বার আনা করা হয়েছিল তখনকার চাইতে এখনকার বাজার অনেক বেশী বেড়ে গেছে ?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: On that my answer is, when it was raised from 9 annas to 12 annas 6 pies, the prices were not so high, but at the present moment there are reasons for reconsidering the situation because prices are abnormally high.

Babu NARENDRA NARAYAN CHAKRABARTY: মাননীয় মন্ত্রী মহাশয়ের কথা শুনে জিজ্ঞাসা করতে চাই যে জিনিসটার পুনর্বিবেচনা তাড়াতাড়ি করা হবে কি ?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Most certainly.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister please tell the House whether Government is willing to consider the case of family allowances of these security prisoners in view of the abnormal rise in the prices of necessary materials of livelihood?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: To clear the position I may tell the House that I am in favour of reviewing the allowances that are given and increasing them so as to meet the present abnormal position.

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state what is the average monthly family allowance given to each security prisoner?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I could not answer that question. The materials with me at the present moment do not enable me to answer the question.

Mr. P. BANERJI: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether the case of Sushil Kumar Banerjee, an employee of the Corporation who was drawing Rs. 75 per month, was brought to his notice?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I remember the name, but I do not know the details of the case.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state what is the maximum and what is the minimum amount paid as family allowance to security prisoners?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: It is very difficult to say. As far as I remember, some have been given as low as Rs. 8 and some have been given as high as Rs. 75 or even Rs. 80. Each case is decided on its own merit.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Has there been any case in which a grant of Rs. 100 has been made?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: No.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: More than Rs. 50?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Yes, up to Rs. 75.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state if it is a fact that the Government of India in a note sent to the Government of Bengal advised the latter not to pay anything more than Rs. 50?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I do not know, but I have answered a question very recently giving details, and I think it will be before the House very soon and you will find that some of the allowances are as high as Rs. 75.

Mr. P. BANERJI: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether Sushil Kumar Banerjee's allowance has been fixed at Rs. 20 to maintain his family consisting of seven members and the petition is already before him? Is he going to consider the case?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I cannot answer it from memory. It may be so, but if any reconsideration is wanted, I will be prepared to reconsider the case.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state what are the basic principles according to which the family allowance of security prisoners is determined?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Formerly Rs. 10 was the maximum during the previous Government, but this Government has done away with the maximum and in consideration of cases has granted allowances up to Rs. 75 a month.

Family allowance of security prisoner Babu Jamini Mohon Pal.

***57. Mr. JNANENDRA CHANDRA MAJUMDAR:** (*a*) With reference to the reply given to the supplementary starred question No. 132, dated the 11th March, 1942, regarding the pecuniary circumstances of the family of security prisoner Babu Jamini Mohan Pal, will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Jails) Department be pleased to state whether he has made any enquiry since then?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the result thereof?

(*c*) Is the Hon'ble Minister aware—

(*i*) that the said Babu Jamini Mohan Pal had a printing press in the town of Comilla whereby he used to earn a good income; and

(*ii*) that after his arrest and detention he is not deriving any income therefrom?

(*d*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government have received any fresh petitions on the 22nd July, 1942, and the 23rd August, 1942, from Jamini Babu giving the details of his present family circumstances?

(*e*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Government contemplate to grant him any family allowance?

(*f*) If the answer to (*e*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason thereof?

(*g*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state (*i*) the source, (*ii*) the amount, and (*iii*) nature of income, if any, by which his family of six members is being maintained now?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) and (*d*) Yes.

(*b*) A family allowance of Rs 15 per mensem has been granted with effect from 1st April, 1942

(*c*) (*i*) He had a press which produced a little income.

(*ii*) No, the press was run by one Sudhanshu Dutt in absence of Babu Jamini Mohan Pal and his family members used to get an income of about Rs.15 per mensem from it till lately

(*e*) Honourable member is referred to the answer to clause (*b*).

(*f*) Does not arise

(*g*) Besides the allowance granted the prisoner has 20 *kanis* of land yielding about 40 maunds of paddy

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state if it is not a fact that when Jamini Mohan Pal was not arrested, he used to get the whole income of the press for himself and now this Sudhanshu Dutt is taking a share of that income?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am not aware of that

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister please tell the House whether for a family consisting of six members this sum of Rs 15 is sufficient in these days of abnormally high prices?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: This is, of course, a matter of opinion. Rs. 15 certainly seems to be not sufficient for some, but it may be quite sufficient for others. If there are considerations which require that the allowance should be increased, I shall be pleased to consider them if any representation is made.

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state when Mr. Jamini Mohan Pal was sent to the prison?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I have not got the details here. So, I cannot answer it.

Point of Order.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I rise on an important point of order and crave your indulgence for a little patient hearing? Sir, on the last occasion the Chief Minister referred to the issue of the Ministers being permitted to lay before the House or publicly stating what advice they have tendered to the Governor in relation to a particular matter. In that connection I beg to invite your attention to the message given to India by the Viceroy of India, Lord Linlithgow, on the 21st June, 1937, which, as he stated, was intended to clarify the constitutional aspect and to restate formally, as he said, the constitutional position as between the Governors and their Ministers and to place on record once again at the climax of the then discusison that he had with the leaders of the Congress, the spirit in which the Governor, the Governor-General and His Majesty's Government approach this matter. Sir, Lord Linlithgow then stated as follows: –

"In all such matters in which he (*i.e.*, the Governor) is not specially required to exercise his individual judgment it is mandatory upon the Governor to accept the advice of his Ministers. Within the limited area of his special responsibilities a Governor is directly answerable to Parliament whether he accepts or does not accept the advice of his Ministers." This refers to the powers covered by individual judgment——(The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Special responsibility)——yes, under section 52 of the Government of India Act. "But if the Governor," continued Lord Linlithgow, "is unable to accept the advice of his Ministers, then the responsibility for his decision is his and his alone. In that event," goes on Lord Linlithgow, "the Ministers bear no responsibility for the decision and are entitled, if they so desire, publicly to state that they take no responsibility for that particular decision or even that they have advised the Governor in an opposite sense."

That clarifies the position regarding the Ministers having a right to state at least to the House and also to the public, if they so desire, how and in what way they have advised in a particular matter which comes even within the sphere of individual judgment.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: What is your point?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I seek your ruling on this question as to whether this House has a right to know from the Minister concerned, as we had tried to know through interpellations, what advice the Hon'ble Minister had given to the Governor in a matter which in his own admission comes within the sphere of the Governor's individual judgment.

Sir, that is the position I am seeking to clarify. Further, Lord Linlithgow said: "Ministers have the duty of advising the Governor over the whole range of executive government within the ministerial field, including the area of special responsibilities, and for advice so given whether on matters within or without the scope of special responsibilities Ministers are answerable to the Legislature."

Sir, this is a very clear exposition of the whole position by one who was responsible as Chairman of the Joint Parliamentary Committee for drafting the whole thing and this is also referred to on page 47 of the Annual Register of India of 1937, where the interpretation of Lord Linlithgow has been given in a concise way, and this may be referred to by you if necessary. I would also in this connection invite your attention to paragraph IX of the Instrument of Instructions to the Governor where it has been stated: "In all matters within the scope of the executive authority of the province, save in relation to functions which he is required by or under the Act to exercise in his discretion, Our Governor shall in the exercise of the powers conferred upon him be guided by the advice of his Ministers, unless in his opinion so to be guided would be inconsistent with the fulfilment of any of the special responsibilities which are by the Act committed to him."

Sir, I submit with reference to the specific case referred to, namely, the detention of certain persons as security prisoners, under the Defence of India Rules, that it comes under the special responsibilities if the Governor so interprets it—though personally I am not prepared to admit that much—even in that case assuming that it comes within the special responsibilities of the Governor, if you will read section 52 of the Government of India Act you will find that Ministers have got a right to advise. That is also borne out by the fact, as has already been stated by the Chief Minister, that security prisoners are detained after a particular period under rule 26 instead of under rule 129 after reference to him. That itself shows—and the Governor himself admits—that these are cases in which ministerial advice must be sought, so that it clearly comes within the scope of individual judgment and not discretion. This is not a matter of discretion and that point I want to make clear. If it is not a matter to be dealt with at the discretion of the Governor but is a matter to be ordinarily decided by individual judgment, then, Sir, I submit that it is not only the duty of the Ministers to advise but it is also their incumbent duty to acquaint this House as to how their advice has been acted up to, and in case the Governor does not act up to that advice it is the right of the Legislature—for which I seek your ruling—to get the proper reply from the Minister concerned.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Dr. Sanyal is a learned constitutional authority and the lecture that he has delivered to us has been very interesting, but I respectfully submit that it is absolutely irrelevant. Now, Dr. Sanyal will do me the favour of taking it from me that I have read and re-read and re-read what Lord Linlithgow laid down in defining the position of Ministers *vis-a-vis* the Governor. Sir, in working Provincial Autonomy under the present Constitution it is likely that cases must arise, it is certain that cases will arise in which a Minister finds himself in conflict with the view that is held by a Governor and those Ministers who had administered seven of the Indian Provinces in the Congress régime found it necessary to get their position clarified and they got that detailed statement from His Excellency the Viceroy. As a matter of fact, I felt it somewhat interesting to ascertain whether the Viceroy's declaration has been modified in view of

the circumstances consequent upon the war conditions, and I have been assured that the assurance given by the Viceroy at that time and the statement he made as to the position of Ministers *vis-a-vis* the Governor stand good even under the present conditions.

Now, Sir, before I discuss the constitutional position that has been defined in the declaration of His Excellency the Viceroy let me point out to my learned friend who is already certainly aware of it, and I am only referring to it as an introduction to what I am going to say, that there are three classes of cases which have got to be considered in the discussion of relations between Ministers and a Provincial Governor. There is the first class of cases which come entirely within the ministerial field and in those cases the Governor is not merely bound to ask for advice but it is mandatory on him to follow the advice given by the Ministers. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I have said that.) In such cases it is not the practice for the Ministers to send cases for the consideration of His Excellency the Governor, but as soon as the Ministers indicate their opinion, the permanent officials carry out the orders contained in the statement of the case made by the Ministers.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Not necessarily if they differ.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Then there is the second class of cases which are in the Governor's individual judgment. There the Governor is to ascertain the view of the Ministers and the Ministers are to tender their advice, but the Governor is not bound to accept the advice tendered by the Ministers.

Then comes the third class of cases which come under the Governor's special responsibility. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: No, Sir, discretion.) where the Governor is not only not bound to follow the advice but not even bound to ask for the advice. Now the case of security prisoners comes under the Governor's special responsibility.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: That is the second category.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Third. I maintain it is third and Dr. Sanyal says it is second.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I submit, that you maintain a thing which is not true and the very fact that your advice was sought proves that it is not so.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I will take one definite case. Supposing, Sir, the Police are of the opinion that Dr. Sanyal should be made a security prisoner. (A voice: God forbid.) And somehow or other that consummation is attained, and Dr. Sanyal is in custody, an order will be passed under section 129.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Yes; because there Ministers have already divested themselves of the responsibility, otherwise they would not have done even that.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: They have delegated powers.

After that the case will come up to the Home Minister for orders under rule 26. The Minister may agree with the Police that the detention is quite justified and therefore an order under rule 26 should be passed. He may think that this arrest was not justified and then he may communicate his advice that he should be released. The Governor might agree with the Minister and he may be released or the Governor might not agree with the Minister and order that he should be detained in custody. Now if the Minister differing from the Governor so desires, he can make a statement to the House: "I tendered this advice to the Governor, but the Governor did not accept it and in this particular case I am not taking responsibility for the detention."

If the Minister desires so to say to the House, "I gave this advice and that was not accepted," he can make a statement in the House, but if the Minister does not desire to let the House know what passed between him and the Governor, I do not think, Sir, the constitutional position as explained by Dr. Sanyal comes to this, that I can be compelled by a series of questions to disclose the advice that I have tendered. I have got the right, if I so desire, to disclose what advice I have given by making a statement in the House, but if I do not so desire, I do not think that the position as explained in the Viceroy's declaration allows a member of this House to require from me a statement as to what advice I have tendered.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: May I draw your attention for the clarification of the issue raised by the Hon'ble Chief Minister to this? Of course these words "if the Minister so desires" appear in Lord Linlithgow's statement, but that desire does not indicate any discretion of the Minister. In fact, the Ministers are not vested with such discretionary power. Lord Linlithgow further goes on and says this that if advice was given whether on matters within or without the scope of special responsibilities Ministers are answerable to the Legislature. The question of answerability makes the position clear.

Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Sir, I think the position will be clear if the Hon'ble Chief Minister, instead of trying to convey to the House that he had given some advice which had not been accepted, had clearly stated, "I take full responsibility for the action," because the attitude which he has taken up when he refuses to disclose what advice he has given leads only to one conclusion and that is that he accepts responsibility for the order that has been passed. If he does not accept the responsibility then he can take the procedure laid down by Lord Linlithgow, viz., that he will disclose the advice he has given. Once he refuses to disclose the advice he has tendered, he must accept responsibility for the order passed, and he must not try to give the House an impression that he had given some advice to somebody and that somebody had not taken that advice. If he takes up that attitude Dr. Sanyal and myself will have no quarrel with him.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I have nothing further to say. I think that the position which Dr. Sanyal and Sir Nazimuddin have tried to make out is this. As I have said, supposing I give certain advice, the Governor may or may not accept it. If he accepts, then there is an end of the matter. If he does not accept, I can revise my opinion and agree with the Governor. Then I take the responsibility for the order that has been passed. But that is entirely different from trying to find out from me what is the advice I have tendered.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: May I remind the Hon'ble Chief Minister that my question on that day was very specific? I wanted to ascertain from him whether Mr. Suresh Chandra Majumdar, Mr. Satya Priya Banerjee and Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal, these three members, were detained under rule 26 with his consent or not. That was my specific question, in reply to which the Hon'ble Chief Minister tried to say something which we understood from his gestures, but he thought that he could not disclose the whole truth for certain reasons——

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The whole thing is before me. After examination and cross-examination by Dr Sanyal, Sir Nazimuddin and others what he said was this, "I will read the rules and see how the position stands. I am prepared to look into the question once again to see how far within the rights that I possess I can disclose the information asked for in this House I will reconsider the matter, but I think that this is the position which I can legitimately take up If I am wrong I am willing to look into the whole matter and unless I am convinced myself that I can do so under the constitution, I am afraid I cannot give more information than I have given I am however prepared to reconsider the matter If I am wrong I will give information as much as I can, but I must act within the constitution."

Dr. Sanyal, the point of order raised by you is no doubt a grave constitutional question. It is impossible for me to give a ruling off-hand. Of course, when the question has been raised in the House it is my duty to give a ruling. I am bound to do so, and I shall give my ruling either tomorrow or the day after when I shall get all these records from the office.

GENERAL DISCUSSION OF THE BUDGET.

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, we can very well congratulate ourselves on the good fortune of having our budget presented for the first time in Bengal by a unique personality. Finance Ministers presenting budgets which are often too abstruse for the comprehension of ordinary intelligence are generally characterized as jugglers in figures. Our present Finance Minister may or may not be such a juggler, but one thing he certainly is—a great artist, whether of the "quick change" type or not, it is not for me to say. His artful replies to questions in the Assembly, his artistic equivocation on the question whether he takes responsibility for certain actions of his officers, his full-throated and solemn promises on the

floor of the House and outside, perhaps never meant to be fulfilled, the beautiful varnish that he paints on unseemly deeds, the masterly steering of the ship of his political allegiance in conformity with the slightest change in weather have all contributed to his reputation as a great artist. The budget that he has presented is in keeping with his reputation. Not only is his budget statement artistically short suppressing as much information as possible, but the proposals themselves, denuded of all cumbrous and inartistic schemes of a nation-building character exhibit the touch of his masterly hand.

Mr. Iswar Das Jalan in initiating the debate referred to the general political situation in the country. That we are passing through extraordinary times no one can deny. Apart from the sufferings entailed by the war, sufferings which we share with the rest of the world, there is a widespread sense of frustration throughout the length and breadth of the Indian sub-continent on account of the clog that has been put on the wheels of political progress. The deadlock is two-fold. However veiled under specious pleas, on the one side there is the undoubted reluctance to transfer real power and on the other there is the lamentable spectacle of the two principal nations living in this land failing to arrive at an honourable understanding with each other, due mainly to the unreasonable and arrogant refusal of one to concede the right of self-determination to the other, a right recognised all over the world and conceded under somewhat similar circumstances and with most salutary results in Soviet Russia. The deadlock at the other end cannot be removed until and unless we have resolved the deadlock at home. Could we in Bengal do something towards the solution of this impasse in our home front? The way in which the administration of the province is being run is only contributing to the tightening of the deadlock. No amount of money provided in the budget for communal harmony could ever be expected to achieve the desired result without a solution of the abovementioned outstanding problem. It was a monumental folly to provide a sum of one lakh in the current year's budget for communal harmony. The administration has found it impossible to spend the bulk of the money. The Opposition criticism of the last year has come perfectly true. The sum of Rs. 15,000 that has been spent has been, we suspect, devoted to party purposes. The Ministry owes an explanation to the House in this respect.

It is said from certain quarters that the present Ministry has no definite policy and has utterly failed in whatever schemes it has undertaken. Those who say so do an injustice to the Ministry because in certain respects the Ministry has a definite and clear cut policy and has been putting it into operation in a most efficient manner.

Sir, let me here try to classify the field of administration in relation to the policy of the Ministry. From this point of view the entire field of administration can be divided into three distinct categories, viz.:—

(1) Matters in respect of which the Ministry has a definite policy.

(2) Matters in respect of which the policy of the Ministry is a policy of abject surrender.

(3) Matters in respect of which the Ministry has no definite policy except the policy of drift.

I intend to deal with these items *seriatim*. The one matter in which the Ministry has a definite policy is "Repression and persecution of the Muslim League and Mussalmans," and this policy the Ministry has been executing with characteristic efficiency ever since it assumed office. I shall now give a few instances. There is a four-pronged attack against the Muslim League and Mussalmans. The first prong is directed against Chairmen of local bodies, who owe allegiance to the Muslim League. Muslim League Chairmen are being systematically ousted, by hook or by crook, from all self-governing institutions and other statutory boards such as district boards, municipalities, district school boards, union boards and debt settlement boards. The nefarious part played by Government in securing the removal of the Chairmen of the Faridpur and the Bankura District Boards is now known to all. They played no more honourable part in respect of the Muslim League Chairman of the District Board of Bogra. Action is also being hatched against the Muslim League Chairmen of the Rajshahi, Mymensingh, Pabna and Dacca District Boards. The Chittagong Municipality has been superseded because it was being presided over by a Muslim League Chairman, whatever other ostensible ground the Government may adduce for their action. The Noakhali Municipality has been superseded under most extraordinary circumstances. The term of the old Board was over and new elections were completed. Before the new Board could come into office the municipality was superseded because in the new election the majority of the seats had been captured by Muslim Leaguers. The shameless behaviour of the Ministry in respect of the Mymensingh District School Board is known to all. Muslim League Chairmen are being ousted right and left from union boards, debt settlement boards and jute committees all over Bengal. Wonder of wonders, the representatives of the Muslim League Parliamentary Party, the main Opposition in the House, have been ousted even from the Jute Advisory Committee constituted under the Jute Regulation Act for the purpose of advising Government as to the quota of land to be sown with jute in any particular year. The Ministry is really making history. All this is being done to crush the influence of the Muslim League, the accredited and universally recognised organisation of the Mussalmans of this country. I can assure the Ministry that they will never be able to kill the Muslim League and that in the attempt they will only kill themselves. They are forging with their own hands the fetters in which they will be led to the gallows when the hour of rendering account comes.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, is it open to the honourable member to threaten others that they will be led to the gallows? (Laughter.)

Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: You are excepted. (Laughter.) The second prong of this offensive is directed against the propaganda arm of the

Muslim League. Every obstacle is being placed against Muslim League demonstrations, black flag and otherwise and against holding Muslim League meetings. In cases in which permission for meetings cannot be altogether withheld impossible and impudent conditions are imposed, such as (1) the Ministry or individual Ministers must not be criticised; (2) no controversial matters should be discussed, and so on and so forth. The Defence of India Rules are being freely misused and Muslim Leaguers prosecuted on frivolous charges never contemplated to come under the purview of the Defence of India Rules.

The third prong is directed against Muslims getting their proper share in Government appointments. Wherever the Ministers can interfere a candidate with leanings towards the Muslim League or whose parents or guardians are Muslim Leaguers have no chance of getting a Government post. In many instances the service ratio rules are being given the go-by to frustrate the claims of Muslim candidates. How the Muslim community has been practically ousted from A. R. P. appointments is now well known to the members of the House. I would like to refer in passing to the interesting side shows that are taking place behind the screen along with the open repression of the Muslim League. A new family touch has been introduced in the distribution of Government patronage. Nepotism is no longer confined to favouritism to nephews. Brothers and sons invested with qualifications not conferred by any recognised university but by "uniform loyalty to British kings," have their rightful place in the heirarchy of nepotism under this shameless regime.

Yet a fourth prong against the Muslim nation is the Ministry's behaviour towards the problem of music before mosques. No stone has been left unturned to wound Muslim susceptibilities and to crush by brutal force Muslim protest in this respect and there is a widespread discontent amongst Mussalmans throughout the length and breadth of this province. Sir, I now come to the second category of the field of administration in which the Ministry has no policy of its own, but follows a policy of abject surrender. The first thing worth notice in this respect is what has been characterised by Mr. Jalan as a policy of repression. Mr. Jalan forgets that this is not the Ministry's own policy. They are in this respect simply carrying out the policy of the Government of India. The most curious part of the affair is that the Ministry does not seem to agree with the Government of India in this matter and yet has not the boldness to say so. The Chief *cum* Home Minister himself behaves in a fashion as if he does not know his own mind. He goes on hunting with the hound and running with the hare with impunity. He does not know whether to own or deny responsibility when questioned about the arrest and detention of some prominent members of this House. He is not bold enough to assert whether his officers behaved properly in dealing with the subversive movement in the district of Midnapore, nor has he the courage to say that there is a *prima facie* case against the officers, which alone could justify the enquiry into their conduct that he has promised on the floor of this House. He made a similar promise in the last session of the Assembly to institute an

enquiry into the Dacca Jail shooting incident. He has not yet had the courtesy to tell the House why the promised Enquiry Committee has not yet been constituted. Is he going to behave in the same fashion with regard to his promise to make an enquiry into the alleged Midnapore excesses? Will he come before the House with a plea that he has had no hand in these matters? If so, was it not his clear duty to consult those who have a hand in the matters before he gave solemn promises to this House? Is he enhancing his own prestige and the prestige of the province by behaving in such shameful, slavish and treacherous manner?

Another important matter in which the Ministry has been following a policy of abject surrender is its jute policy. Could a Ministry that is its own master decide the quota of land to be sown with jute this year after the sowings have already commenced? When will licences be prepared and given to the cultivators? Obviously growers have been and will, for a considerable time to come, have been sowing without any licences being given to them and the control will thus be reduced to a farce. Again, what could be the justification for fixing eight annas as the quota? May we know what was the recommendation of the Jute Advisory Committee constituted under the Jute Regulation Act, all the Indian M. L. A. members of which now belong to the Progressive Coalition Party? I am told they recommended only four annas. That was also the general opinion expressed in this House. At whose behest then the Government came to the belated decision that this year's quota should be eight annas? Here also the Ministry has followed a policy of abject surrender—surrender not only of the rights of the Provincial Government as such, but, what is more deplorable, surrender of the vital interests of the cultivators, the interests of the masses, the interests of the people of Bengal?

I come last to the third category of matters in which the Ministry has no definite policy, but has been following a policy of drift. The first thing that comes to one's mind in this respect is the Government's treatment of the food problem. This question has already been discussed threadbare in this House and will be further discussed shortly. I would, therefore, make only a brief reference to it. Whatever the Government have hitherto done has only worsened the situation. Every remedy they have applied has aggravated the disease. They are at present doing nothing to push forward the vitally connected "Grow More Food" campaign. They have rather stabbed it in the back by fixing eight annas as the coming year's jute quota. What we dread to contemplate is that this policy will bring Bengal to ruin in no time. There will be widespread scarcity and famine. Thousands will die of starvation and millions will die of deadly maladies that always visit famine-stricken lands. Government will soon have to begin a new campaign—a "Bury More Dead" campaign. They do not seem to know the conditions prevailing in large tracts of the country. About 60 per cent. of the people have no money in their hand. Most of them are unemployed and have already sold almost all the[illegible] their lands and even

plough cattle They are already on the brink of the precipice. A few steps more and they will be hurled into the fathomless abyss. The Food Minister is fiddling away as merrily as ever. He has not seen to it that sufficient money be provided in the budget for the "Grow More Food" campaign. The sum of 18 lakhs that was provided in the revised budget has not been repeated in the next year's budget. Does this mean that the Ministry has no scheme in connection with this campaign to be executed in the coming year? Then again, we find that under the head "Famine" there is no special provision for the apprehended situation. There was an increased provision of 51 lakhs in the revised budget for giving relief to the flood-stricken areas of Midnapore and 24-Parganas. In the coming year's budget there is nothing but a repetition of the normal provision. There could not be any more flagrant lack of imagination. This year they had to deal with Midnapore and 24-Parganas alone. In the coming year they will have to deal with two-thirds of the province and at least a sum of Rs. 5 crores will be necessary for gratuitous relief and agricultural loan, if not for actual famine relief.

The second item I want to touch upon is the absence of any provision in the budget for any constructive scheme The war has brought in its train not only "blood, toil and sweat" but also unique and unprecedented opportunities for industrial development What are we doing in that respect? The war has made us all realise of what importance the salt and the sugar industries are to Bengal We find in the budget only a tinkering with the problem of salt in some limited areas on a cottage industry basis The budget offers no prospect of anything like a solution of the salt problem of Bengal.

Nothing whatsoever is being done in respect of sugar A good deal could be done for cotton-growing in this emergency, but we have to search in vain in the budget for any provision for this

The Education, Medical and Public Health Departments are being unduly starved. The Secondy Education scheme is effectively shelved. Growth of primary education is at a standstill In the next year we cannot expect to get even a quarter of our requirements in quinine. Many other drugs have made themselves scarce, and can be had only at prices beyond the means of the ordinary man. Now was the time for encouraging the ayurvedic, unani and the homeopathic systems of medicine. Millions are bound to die next year for want of treatment The Government ought to have evolved a scheme for the substitution, wherever necessary, of the existing system by indigenous systems about the soundness of which there cannot be any question.

Sir, whatever field of administration we turn to, we find evidence of a lamentable lack of imagination, initiative and constructive ability coupled with mismanagement and corrupt practices, which if not timely averted will bring utter ruination to this fair land

Mr. J. W. CHIPPENDALE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, in normal times the framing of a budget is a very difficult task. Our money is

restricted and the claims are very numerous and important. We have the Government departments to consider; we have also nation-building schemes and provision for public utilities and so on. Well, all these have got to be satisfied. I have not seen any one year in which every member of this House has been satisfied about the provisions contained in the budget. It has always been a difficult one and now, Sir, we are in straitened times. War is at our door. Money is scarce. We have been visited by natural calamities. Everything around us points to perplexities and strenuous times. Therefore, at a time like this it is but natural that Government should seek the line of least resistance. They could not do anything better than what they have been pleased to give us. It is true it does not satisfy many, but what can be done under the circumstances? You cannot evolve a better budget than the budget which they have produced.

Sir, in the provisions made in the budget I am glad to notice the items referred to as "Extraordinary Charges." War efforts should be the first consideration of this House and every other House of a similar nature throughout India. These items referred to are part and parcel of war effort and therefore I welcome them. No doubt the expenditure would be considerable but, Sir, it is a dire necessity. One of the items in which I am interested and which ought to interest us all is the creation of a Directorate of Civil Supplies. The problem which they will be called upon to tackle is not only a difficult problem but the most important problem of the day to which we must give our best consideration. It goes to the very root of law and order for which His Excellency the Governor is himself ultimately responsible; and therefore the appointment of such a Directorate is essential. Now, Sir, I trust that there will be no importation of an expert in this connection. We do not want experts. The resources of Bengal are very slender and nobody wants a burden cast upon them. All that we ask is this, that the Directorate should proceed vigorously with a singleness of purpose and a single eye to duty. What they should exercise is commonsense. They must make mistakes. It is but natural. Let them make mistakes. They can easily rectify these mistakes as they go along and proceed with the work tenaciously, fearlessly and equitably.

We have heard a great deal about hoarding. Now hoarding for consumption is an instinct with which every animal is born into this world and man is no exception to the rule. It is hoarding for resale with exorbitant and oppressive profits which is hated by all. Everybody detests it, and I hope that the Directorate will see all things done in due order, with precision and with strength, punishing those who contravene the rules in an exemplary manner.

Sir, I have no sympathy with committees. Committees framed for this purpose will be worse than useless. We want, Sir, action and not speeches. It is for that reason that I gladly welcome the Directorate.

Then there is lastly one other matter to which I may advert. The Chief Minister has told us that additional taxation is necessary. There is no doubt that he is right. Money must be had. Amongst the items for

additional taxation there is one that deserves our serious consideration, namely, taxation on consumption of electricity. As it is, we are paying too much for our lights and fans in Calcutta. I trust, Sir, that this severe burden cast upon us will cease when the problems of war are over and normal times return.

I think, Sir, that on the whole we may welcome the budget and thank the Ministers for having given us of their best.

Mr. PULIN BEHARY MULLICK: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am afraid I can hardly congratulate the Government upon the statement made by the Hon'ble Chief Minister and Minister of Finance in presenting the budget for the coming year. I am also sure that in this view my honourable colleagues in the Assembly and a large number of influential and informed public men will opine entirely in my favour. The Hon'ble Chief Minister has remarked that the essential problem of today in Bengal and the problem which affects 99 per cent. of its inhabitants is the problem of food supply and the supply of essential commodities. There can be no compromise on this question that whatever the exigencies of the situation, the supply must be assured. You cannot convince the *raiyats*, the dumb millions, that the *Sarkar* is at war and they must sacrifice in view of the emergent times through which we are passing. To quote the Premier himself on a former occasion what they need is pure and simple *dal bhat*. But, Sir, what assurance is forthcoming from the statement of the Hon'ble Chief Minister that the *dal bhat* of the Bengal *raiyats* has been assured? What he does say today is that the control of supplies cannot be obtained in a day. But, Sir, the question of control of supplies is being tackled by the Provincial Government in co-operation with the Central Government for months now and, Sir, with what result? The result has been dearth and scarcity in the mufassil, queues and food riots in the metropolis with prices ranging from 200 to 300 per cent. above the normal in the open market and anything up to 10 times in the black market.

Sir, there is not a word of hope in the Premier's speech. Has the Bengal Government suggested to the Central Government the ways and means whereby the food situation can really be solved? What steps have they taken to see that exports can be rigidly controlled or curtailed? Is there any indication in his speech that the consumer would be taken into confidence, that a committee of experts and non-officials will be appointed to assist the Government in devising means for the production and distribution of foodstuffs, control and fixing of quotas? But, Sir, on the other hand, we are told that the difficulties in regard to railway transport are at the root of the situation. But, Sir, what steps have been taken to utilise the waterways of Bengal? If the truth is to be told, it must be admitted that the present deplorable food situation is due to complete chaos here and abroad,—chaos in the Provincial Government where inexperienced men have been appointed to tackle a problem much beyond their capacity and chaos in the relations between the Provincial and the Central Governments in which there is no co-ordination whatsoever.

Sir, regarding the coal and fuel situation, what the Transport Member, the Hon'ble Sir Edward Benthall, confessed in the Assembly was that while a few months ago 13 to 14 per cent. of the available wagons at collieries in Bihar and Bengal were allotted to the public, this percentage had now been reduced to five. After this, is there any wonder that the present condition in Calcutta will be deplorable and will continue to be deplorable? What steps have been taken by the Bengal Government to safeguard the interests of the metropolis? It is no use complaining that the prensent shortage is artificial and deliberate, that the handling of the food problem has been wrong, that there had been profiteering and hoarding by tradesmen. Sir, the tradesmen were there before and have all along been there. The fact remains that in any scheme that the Government has formulated there was no proposal whatever for an equitable distribution of foodstuffs.

In this connection, I cannot help recalling that members of my community, I mean the Schedule Castes numbering about one-fifth of the total population of the province, were not consulted in the so-called "Grow More Food" campaign. Their assistance was not sought to the extent which was desirable. It is not a secret that members of my community have always taken a leading part in the production of foodstuffs. Ninety per cent. of them live on land and are responsible for the agricultural produce of the land. They have a special practical knowledge regarding the agricultural problems of the land. And yet no step has been taken to utilise their experience and advice. In Bengal, at least, Sir, without the active co-operation and assistance of the members of my community any "Grow More Food" campaign is bound to fail. (Maulvi ABDUL WAHAB KHAN: One of you is in the cabinet.)

The new budget does not take into account any possible calamity like the one we recently had. There is no provision on account of subvention for the Calcutta Corporation which according to the Hon'ble Chief Minister himself is inevitable. Sir, the reduction in educational grants would affect injuriously those communities which are educationally less advanced and which include my community as well. I can therefore only view such reduction with apprehension.

On the whole, Sir, the Hon'ble Chief Minister's performance has been most disappointing. The Budget does not take into account certain serious and inevitable factors and in view of the uncertain times through which we are passing, it can only be regarded as an approximation to the reality and a very rough approximation at that. Sir, in conclusion, we are to live by gratuities, grants, loans, advances and subventions. This, Sir, is a state of affairs which is unsound financially, unwise politically and fundamentally undesirable.

(The House was then adjourned for 15 minutes.)

(*After adjournment.*)

Khan Bahadur Nawab MUSHARRUF HOSSAIN: Sir, I was not present when the Hon'ble the Chief Minister, who, in addition to his duties

as Home Minister, has been working as Finance Minister, delivered his Budget speech. I have got a copy of that speech which I have read carefully from beginning to end and am of opinion that this Budget speech is really a businesslike speech and I fully appreciated it. It contains a lot of redeeming features and I think it is not open to much criticism. Therefore I had no intention of speaking on this occasion but for the fact that on one vital point, namely, the want of irrigation in that part of the province to which I belong, I mean North Bengal, Government have been hopelessly lacking in their activities. It is a question, Sir, in which I am really interested because it is one which vitally concerns the entire agricultural population of North Bengal. Sir, this question was taken up by the Cabinet in which I happened to be a Minister and funds were provided for a preliminary contour survey of North Bengal. Anybody who has some knowledge of the condition of affairs in North Bengal must admit that it is the most unfortunate place in the province and that it is the most backward tract. We in the Ministry, Sir, wanted to provide rupees five lakhs in the Budget for the contour survey of North Bengal. Up till then, Sir, members belonging to North Bengal never knew how to put their case before this House and before the Government and up till then nothing had been done to improve the economic condition of the people of North Bengal

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: May I draw your attention to the fact that the Hon'ble the Finance Minister is not present in the House? What is the use of our discussing the Budget in his absence?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order. The Hon'ble Mr. Barman is there to take notes for the Hon'ble the Finance Minister.

Khan Bahadur Nawab MUSHARRUFF HOSSAIN: Lands in North Bengal are mostly high lands. One-third of the entire land is high land and the remaining two-thirds are mainly lands of medium height and are not low lands. Even on the two-thirds portion nothing can grow unless there is plenty of rains. But there are innumerable rivers flowing through North Bengal and if these rivers are tackled and the adjoining lands are irrigated, the whole of North Bengal can be converted into a land of plenty. Sir, if we go to the Burdwan Division we find that lakhs and lakhs of rupees are spent for the purpose of irrigation and large tracts of land which had been lying fallow in previous years have now become fertile granaries. In South Bengal canals and khals have been cut as is evident from the Irrigation budgets in which you will find budget provisions of lakhs and crores for many many years. But you will nowhere find more than, say, Rs. 1,000 provided in the Budget for the whole of North Bengal, or spent for the improvement of land there. We, however, made a start when we were in the Ministry and we managed to provide Rs. 40,000 in the Budget for contour survey of North Bengal in the year in which our Ministry fell, and when we left the Ministry the scheme also was cast aside. We find that only Rs 11,000 was spent during that year although I may inform the House that not a single surveyor appeared in

our part of the province and nothing has been done to continue the work that was begun in the year before last. I ask, Sir, why is so much money being spent for South Bengal and nothing for North Bengal? My friends in the Government have been complaining that sufficient foodstuff is not being produced in the province. How can you produce sufficient quantity of foodstuff if you do not care to improve the land? Land is the medium through which you grow your food, and I shall give you my own experience in the matter. Either you must take recourse to proper irrigation or you must give better and scientific manure to improve the yield and grow more food. From my own experience of last year I can tell you that with scientific manuring you can grow double the foodstuff from the same piece of land. I used to get from a piece of land of mine 600 maunds of paddy in previous years when I used no manure. Last year I used manure and the result was that I got 1,300 maunds of paddy from the same land. So when you say that this year more paddy should be grown, why should not Government tackle the problem by supplying manure to cultivators and thus help them to grow double the usual crop. If they care, they can do so. Mr. Ishaque, the Special Officer of the Agriculture Department, went to Jalpaiguri and saw the work that was being done by me at my place. He went there in the rainy season and he saw how the plants were growing. He was a jute expert and when he saw my jute field he said that each bigha of my land will give me at least six maunds of jute. That is on account of better manuring. As a matter of fact, in a place where I was getting just about 18 to 19 maunds, I got this year 42 maunds. So, you see what quantity of paddy can be grown if the place is manured.

Then take the case of Burdwan. There you will find that in irrigated lands they get 6 maunds per bigha, whereas in unirrigated lands they cannot get more than 4 maunds per bigha.

So, if you really believe that sufficient foodstuff is not growing in the country, there are two ways of increasing it. One is by better manuring. If Government can distribute manure to the cultivator just now, the cultivator can grow not only more foodstuff but he can grow double the quantity if sufficient manure is forthcoming.

I asked Mr. Ishaque, "what is the good of going round and why do you not distribute just a few maunds of manure to each cultivator?" He said, "where shall I have the fund?" Give the cultivators good manure and get better results of the crop. I would request the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge of Agriculture to provide sufficient funds this year to purchase manure and have it distributed among the poor cultivators. That is one suggestion of mine for growing more food. As my time is up, I have to finish here.

Mr. D. GLADDING: Mr. Deupty Speaker, Sir, it was a new experience, to see the Hon'ble Mr. Fazlul Huq on his feet presenting a Budget: all facts and figures, none (or very little) of his personality in it, and the Opposition Benches sitting quiet as mice. We know him best as a painter in political oils; a very ingenious painter, whose recent canvases have puzzled even some of his friends. But in this Budget speech, the shortest

we have heard for many years, he has given us a clear black and white sketch with commendable economy of line; and with a proper absence of ingenuity—until, at any rate, we get to the end of it and come to his taxation proposals. I accuse him of ingenuity at that point, as I will explain later.

I will follow the Chief Minister's example and try not to be too lengthy. This Budget is a War Budget, with grim consequences to our financial position. The war and its consequences take toll more and more of our resources. Expenditure on nation-building is by force of circumstances pushed more and more into the background, there to mark time until hostilities cease or until some miracle of increased revenue intervenes to make it possible for them to march forward again. We all deplore that this should be the case, but we all know that it cannot be otherwise. Expenditure on Civil Defence, the control of Food Supplies, Civic Guards, Extra Police, and on some measure of relief to Government servants on account of the high cost of living, claims priority and must be given priority.

The war, however, is not merely taking money out of the till; it is also putting money into it. I tried to make this point last year, and should like to illustrate it once again now. While the war has reduced our revenue from the Jute Export Duty by roughly 1 crore it gave us 2 crores 21 lakhs in 1939-40 but will only give us 1¼ crore in this year and in the next year—it has added handsomely to our revenue from Income Tax, Excise, Forests, Entertainment Tax and Betting Tax. The yield from these is now higher by 2½ crores than it was in 1939-40, and higher by 1 crore than was expected in the Budget Estimate for 1942-43. The only considerable drops of revenue in 1942-43 which seem in my opinion attributable to the war are the drops of 13 lakhs under "Commercial Stamps" and 7 lakhs under "Electricity Duty," making 20 lakhs in all. So the war is going to save our revenue in 1942-43 from being worse by 1 crore instead of being worse by the mere 2 lakhs that is shown in the Revised Estimate. I have lost touch with the Budgets of other provinces, but I expect that their estimates would tell a similar story of war contribution to revenues. The difference will be, however, that they have no Jute Export Duty to lose whereas Bengal, to whom our share of this duty was thrown as a life line by Sir Otto Niemeyer, has lost a crore per annum on that account.

Just two points about the yields of revenue shown in these estimates. Why is it that Commercial Stamps, which yielded 89 lakhs in 1941-42, are only going to yield 72 lakhs in this year and next? I can understand that unsettled trade conditions have something to do with it, but can they have as much to do with it as all that? Would the Hon'ble Minister kindly give us further details from the Finance Department's papers? The amount of money that is passing through business channels as a result of the war, especially through the operations of the Supply Department, is tremendous, but apparently it is all going through channels that do not attract Stamp Duty. Is it partly due to an exemption of the

Government of India from having to pay Stamp Duties on contracts and the like? If so, might we not put this fact into the scale when seeking, as we have done and as we shall have to continue to do, financial assistance from the Government of India? Secondly, what has gone wrong with the Sales Tax? If you allow anything for overestimation of its probable yield, I do not think you should allow much. And however much you allow for the "reduction of private sales of building materials and of imported consumers goods"—to use the words of the Budget speech—it should surely be largely offset by the phenomenal increase in sale prices of all taxable commodities that were actually on sale to the ordinary public? Has the Hon'ble Minister no further explanation to give? In any case, would he kindly let us know what the actual yield of the Sales Tax was up to the end of December (the Accountant-General, Bengal, will, I think, have supplied the figures by now) and what the actual cost of collecting it was up to the end of December? Here, again, we have a case of the Government of India being exempted from a tax; for our Statute says that sales to the Supply Department are to be exempt from the Sales Tax. Their purchases have been terrific, and may include some purchases which would otherwise have passed through private retailers and therefore have paid the tax; but I doubt whether this has much to do with the drop below expectation. It more likely explains why the originally estimated yield was not, say, 2 crores instead of 1 crore. This point also might be put into the scales against the Government of India, if the financial *pandits* of the Government of Bengal find, on examination, that it will hold any water.

With regard to the Revenue Estimates for the coming year, my general comment is that I expect they will prove to be underestimates in the case of Income Tax, Excise, Entertainment Tax, Betting Tax and Electricity Duty. If these, added all together, are not better than expected by at least 40 lakhs, I shall be surprised

On the expenditure side of the estimates, the increase in the Revised of 46 lakhs over the Budget is the net result roughly of an increase of 64 lakhs for war reasons (Additional Police, Home Guards, etc., Directorate of Civil Supplies, Civic Guards and Dearness Allowances) and an increase of 50 lakhs under "Famine Relief" due to natural calamity and not to war reasons: set off by a reduction of 64 lakhs under "Education," "Public Health" and "Civil Works," mainly for war reasons, namely, shortage of materials. In other words the increase of Revenue due to war reasons more than covers the increase of Expenditure due to war reasons. The whole worsening is on account of non-war reasons: a defect of Revenue by 79 lakhs and an increase of Expenditure by 50 lakhs, making 130 lakhs in all. In the coming year, however, if the estimates prove correct, the increase of Revenue attributable to war reasons will be 20½ lakhs (20 lakhs under "Income Tax" and ½ a lakh under "Betting Tax") out of the total increase of 34 lakhs; whereas the increase of 33 lakhs under "Expenditure" will include an increase of 55 lakhs for war reasons (Dearness Allowances 35 lakhs, Home Guards 17 lakhs, Directorate of Civil Supplies 3 lakhs).

As I have already said, I think that the estimates of increased Revenue attributable to the war in the coming year are underestimates, but I am afraid that I think also that there is some underestimation of Expenditure on the war side. For instance will not the cost of the Directorate of Civil Supplies have to be considerably higher than estimated? And is there not going to be a "Grow More Food Campaign" that will cost a good deal, despite the absence of any provision for it?

The big recent additions to Expenditure on account of the war are in respect of the food problem and in respect of Dearness Allowances. The European Party, as has already been made clear, is far from satisfied with Government's workmanship with regard to the supply of food and the control of its prices. We shall not object to further expenditure on properly conceived machinery to deal with these problems, and we trust that considerations of economy will not be allowed to handicap the new administration. Dearness Allowances went up by 20 lakhs in 1942-43 above the original estimate, and are to go up by another 35 lakhs in 1943-44; from which we gather that the total expenditure on Dearness Allowances in 1943-44 will be something like 60 lakhs. We cannot help thinking that this question of Dearness Allowances had been allowed to get somewhat out of hand. Government's sudden decision, for instance, to make a grant of as much as Rs. 9 to Government servants on pays between Rs. 35 and Rs. 100 in Calcutta, and their enforcement of a similar figure (though up to a higher limit) on the Calcutta Corporation, struck us as unnecessarily generous, and the two supplementary orders that were issued between January the 10th and February the 6th, raising those figures to Rs. 14 in Calcutta and Rs. 8 in the mofussil, were similarly not easy to digest. Industry has of course, if you add in the value of the food shops which it is maintaining, risen to the same or even higher levels in Calcutta; but this was partly due to the awards of Government officers and partly to the special psychology of labour. I am not qualified to discuss domestic budgets; but if it is a fact that wage earners, Government and industrial, require as much as we have given them in order to make their ends meet, it does seem strange that the non-wage earning majority of the population should be as far from the verge of starvation as they appear to be. We suggest, at any rate, that Government should think many times before it makes any further additions to these allowances. One other point about these allowances. What is the meaning of the adjective "supplementary" that is attached to the increases sanctioned on the 11th January and 5th February? We trust that Government has not created a position from which it might be argued that the allowances sanctioned before those dates will be less subject to reduction, as prices improve, than the allowances sanctioned on those dates.

We are all naturally interested in the loans to the Calcutta Corporation which figure in the Debt and Deposits Section of the Estimates, but we suppose that we shall have to wait for real illumination until the results of Mr. Gurner's enquiry into the finances of that body are made public. Until then, instead of criticising, we will acknowledge that the war must

have placed the Calcutta Corporation in difficulties which attract substantial assistance from the State and which should not be a net charge upon that body. Furthermore, the Central Government should, in our opinion, bear a substantial share of the appropriate State assistance, and we will support the Provincial Government in any reasonable claims which it may make upon the Centre in this behalf. I see on page 77 of the Red Book that the Government of India will contribute one-third of the total cost of the Corporation's expenditure on Civil Defence. Does this mean that the Bengal Government is going to bear the other two-thirds? And is this all that the Bengal Government asked the Government of India to contribute for that particular purpose? We should like answers to these questions.

And now I should like to put a question about Advances to Cultivators. We expressed misgivings last year about the pitch nowadays of these advances, and asked for a statement in future Red Books showing the progress of collections against outstanding dues.

A statement is given at the bottom of page 90 of the Red Book showing that the balance on 1st April, 1942, was 1 crore 26 lakhs; that the further Advances made in 1942-43 were 1 crore 13½ lakhs and that repayments during 1942-43 are expected to be 60 lakhs odd. Considering the prices which cultivators are getting for their crops in the non-cyclone areas, a collection of 60 lakhs would be in keeping with the past fine record of cultivators in their repayment of Advances. But how have collections actually been progressing? Would the Hon'ble Minister let us know what were the actual recoveries up to the end of December?

Now as regards the taxation proposals and my charge against the Hon'ble Minister that he stooped to ingenuity in the framing of them. The European Party agree with the Hon'ble Minister that Bengal should do what it can to reduce the growing pile of its indebtedness by raising additional revenues, but we do not give the Hon'ble Minister full marks for his choice of the taxes to be exploited. If I were Chancellor of the Exchequer, I think I know what I should have done. If permitted to do so by the learned and diligent officers of the Finance Department, I should have gone for the luxuries. I should have made a further rise in Excise Duties while the going was good: I should have imposed a differential Sales Tax on selected luxuries; I should have raised the Betting Tax, but not by as much as 150 per cent; and I should possibly have raised the tax on cinema tickets, but not by as much as is proposed in the Hon'ble Minister's Finance Bill. I should, not, I feel sure, have dreamt of raising the Electricity Duty on lights and fans. Lights and fans are not a luxury. The Electricity Duty, in any case, is a barbarous duty (though I say so myself who had a great deal to do with the original imposition of it), and amounts at its present level to a sales tax of no less than 25 per cent. on the commodity as sold in Calcutta. The Bill proposes to raise it, if you please, to a sales tax of 50 per cent. What the Chief Minister has done is to select three taxes all of which will fall upon Calcutta in particular (the increased Electricity Duty will fall upon Calcutta alone), thus leaving a majority

of this House unaffected; and three taxes which cost him practically nothing to collect; the cinemas do not charge for collecting the tax on cinema tickets, the Turf Club charges only a nominal figure for collecting Betting Taxes and the Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation charges the nominal sum of Rs. 1,000 per month for collecting the rich proceeds of the Electricity Duty. This is all very ingenious but not, we think, entirely commendable. We may have more to say about this when it comes to the debates on the Finance Bill; and it is more than likely, at any rate, that we shall move an amendment of clause 6 of the Bill with a view to exempting a larger block of the poorer members of the community from this doubling of the sales tax on the non-luxury article, electricity, which is proposed by the Hon'ble Minister.

Sir, I have said all that we want to say today, and will now resume my seat.

Mr. A. M. ABDUL HAMID: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have listened with rapt attention and care the budget speech of the Hon'ble the Chief-*cum*-Home-*cum*-Finance Minister and the more I have gone through the printed statement or speech of the Hon'ble Minister and scrutinized the budget, the more I am convinced that he had no hand in the preparation of either. Either the Hon'ble Minister was too much involved in his other multitarious works including the negotiations with the Marwaris and other business magnates of his choice for reasons best known to himself, or he was not taken in confidence like that, in Midnapore affair. For, otherwise, I wonder how during the present abnormal times the budget could be of the colour it represents. In the "price control section" of the budget under head "Extraordinary charge" the Hon'ble Minister has been content with the appointment of a Directorate of Civil Supplies only without making any proper diagnosis of the true situation. The Hon'ble Minister has not taken note of the fact that since the passing of the Bengal Tenancy Amendment Act, 1937, agricultural lands are gradually passing from the hands of *bona fide* agriculturists to non-agriculturists with the consequent reduction in production from the soil. The non-agriculturists seldom take to agriculture as their profession but content themselves in possessing their lands through *bargadars*. *Bargadars* are generally peasant cultivators; they each have a few plots of land of their own; they cultivate these *barga* lands only when they have finished with their own and the net result is that these *barga* lands are never properly cultivated and manured and production goes down to almost half in consequence, in most cases. If the Hon'ble Minister would care to inspect an agricultural field, it will be very easy for him to distinguish a plot of *barga* land from cultivator's own land, from the very nature of cultivation. This aspect of the question is being totally neglected and the reasons are not far to seek. We are not for the amelioration of the condition of the cultivators as we profess but are for robbing them of their land one way or the other. This shows clearly what is the motive behind in not bringing in a Land Alienation Bill to save the country and peasantry from utter ruin in the near future.

I have been crying hoarse on this subject but all my cries have gone in wilderness. As far back as the 10th March, 1939, in discussing a cut motion standing in my name I pressed for the introduction of a Land Alienation Bill on the lines of one existing in the Punjab and the then Hon'ble Revenue Minister was pleased to say "that the abolition of landlord's transfer fee has given more temptation to non-agriculturists to invest more money in lands.....that it is against public policy that land should pass out of the hands of *bona fide* cultivators to the hands of non-agriculturists. It is not easy to decide who is an agriculturist and who is not .. .. But that is not going to deter Government from taking action.....the problem is under examination of some of our best experts and.....I hope to place a draft Bill at the earliest opportunity".

The difficulty to distinguish an agriculturist from a non-agriculturist may well be obliterated if an agriculturist is defined on the lines following: "An agriculturist is one who is an agriculturist by birth or lives upon agriculture as his main profession and is generally known as *krishak* or *kasthar* who tills the soil by himself and or by blood relations and relations in marriage and not by hired labour only." These are the backbone of the society and if they are robbed of their lands, as at present, the state of deficiency of staple food-grain will ever go on increasing and no amount of control will improve the situation.

Government must realize that prior to the occupation of Burma by the Japanese, India used to import about 14 lakhs of tons of rice from Burma every year. As Bengal is purely a rice-consuming province the lion's share of this 14 lakhs fell to Bengal; besides she used to import from Assam and Bihar Hence it can be safely assumed that Bengal's annual deficit in rice is not less than 14 lakhs of tons, if not more Then, I ask in all seriousness, such being the condition, what was the justification in agreeing to export 20,000 tons of rice a month from Bengal to Ceylon which robbed us of all our reserve in the stock of rice, resulting in an abnormal and unprecedented rise in price?

In the Pabna district where there was a total failure of crop in half the district known as the Jumna area and where no relief measure has yet been introduced either by the Government or the District Board, Sub-Registry offices are more crowded than any controlled shop for the sale of sugar or kerosene or rice and thousands of *bighas* of land are being transferred every day to non-agriculturists and the transfers to non-agriculturists mean loss of at least 50 per cent. of gross production from these lands. I hope the Hon'ble Minister will give his most earnest and careful consideration to this aspect of the situation and bring the desired Bill as early as possible. Under the present condition we cannot wait even for a day. This may be easily done by amending Chapter VIIA of the Bengal Tenancy Act or by introducing a fresh Bill on the lines of the Punjab Land Alienation Bill. With the passing of the Land Alienation Bill arrangement must also be made for rural credit without which there cannot be any improvement in the situation.

I wonder why no test relief is being started in the Pabna district where the situation is very acute. That would have given some money to the poor to tide over the present difficulty. Besides, if these test relief workers were engaged in clearing the jungle in the interior of the Sadar subdivision, thousands of *bighas* of land could have been reclaimed and made available for growing more food grains. I alone could give about 1,000 *bighas* for such a purpose, not to speak of others. If *aus* is sown in these reclaimed lands, an enormous quantity of rice would be made available by *Ashar* next.

In the coming year's Budget care has been taken not to show expenditure separately for Calcutta and mofussil area under the head "Extraordinary Charges". This has probably been done to avoid criticism that was hurled at by me during the last year's discussion

The Budget shows the same gradual increase under heads "Police", "General Administration", "Jail" and other allied subjects. This, they say, has been due to the abnormal situation created by the war. But I can assure the House that this gradual increase will go on merrily even after peace is restored and treaty has been signed It is vain to criticise the Hon'ble Minister on this account as it is well known that he is only a second fiddle in this show

The increase under these heads has resulted in the reduction of expenditure in all nation-building departments, but Chakhar has not been deprived of her share in the transaction Though the building grant of Rs 56,000 has been denied to her, an additional grant of Rs. 45,000 has been made available to her, though we do not know for what purpose this has been allotted. Money could not be had for contour survey but Chakhar cannot be forgotten. Long live Chakhar!

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH SEN: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have analysed the speech of the Hon'ble Chief Minister in presenting the budget for 1943-44 and also the budget estimate for the same year I do not find anything extraordinary in the budget and he discloses no new initiative as to setting up a province-wide organization in every sense of the term for tackling the insuperable difficulties which are facing us today Let me, for convenience of the honourable members of this House, summarise the difficulties.

Shortage of food and essential commodities and the clogging of trade due to transport difficulties and hoarding of commodities:

Lack of finance to solve difficulties in the way of obtaining raw materials for industries but for which the nation has to go without the most necessary things such as cloth, steel, chemicals and so on:

Unsatisfactory condition of civil defence arrangement and the consequent risk of the economic life of the province getting paralysed as a result of the mass exodus of labourers in the event of air-raids occurring again:

The uncanny tendency of a continuous rise in prices and the cost of living of the people becoming an unbearable burden.

The budget evidently is still on old bureaucratic lines trying to balance revenues and expenditure in spite of the contrary suggestions of the Hon'ble Chief Minister. It seems that no conscious effort is made to raise revenues and to appropriate expenditure for taking measures and establishing organizations for the purpose of solving the difficulties which I have stated already. In times like this we must first of all, in preparing our budget, determine the ends for us and then allocate expenditure out of available revenues for satisfying those ends. If the means for satisfaction of these ends are not enough, we should try to raise them. If we cannot raise them, we should distribute our resources on lines which will necessarily have to be different from the old stereotyped methods. The Hon'ble Chief Minister has told us that we start with an opening balance of one crore and fifty-four lakhs. Revenue receipts are placed at 16 crores and 2 lakhs or 34 lakhs higher than the revised. The estimate of expenditure of revenue account stands at 17 crores and 55 lakhs, which is 33 lakhs more than the anticipated expenditure in the current year. The Hon'ble Chief Minister also tells us that he expects a closing balance of 87 lakhs.

A closing balance of 87 lakhs is an inconsiderable amount and with a bank clerk's instincts one would say straightaway that this amount cannot be utilised for civil defence, defence of labourers in industries and for building up a nation-wide food organization. Time will not permit me to discuss here details of such a civil defence expenditure and for building up a nation-wide food organisation I still hope that the committee which has been appointed to recommend measures for tackling the food problem will recommend such a nation-wide food organization and that the Hon'ble Chief Minister will bring a supplementary budget for implementing the same About Civil Defence the people are far from being satisfied as regards the provision of shelters and other necessary air-raid precautions and a considerable expenditure will still have to be incurred for increasing such arrangement. I note with regret that the Government have not been able to persuade the Government of India for not realising repayment in respect of loans which they advanced last year for Civil Defence expenditure. The Government should make a very strong representation to the Government of India and convince them that Civil Defence is more a Central concern than a provincial affair and that the Government of India should not only defer realising loans which they advanced for this purpose but also should make a fresh advance for strengthening the Civil Defence arrangement in Bengal, which happens to be, at the moment, most seriously threatened and to defer repayment till the end of the war.

About the organization which I am referring to for tackling the food problem, the committee will make their recommendations. But I should point out here that for setting up of such an organization, the Government should be prepared to lay out a considerable amount for the purpose of employing not the civil servants who are already in Government employment, but for recruiting real experts in commerce and economics for the purpose of running this food organization. In England immediately after the war broke out, the Government there took over all the officers who

were working in the Imperial Economic Committee and independent organizations for carrying out researches and surveys in Empire economic problem and absorbed them in the Food Ministry and they were the people who brought about system amidst chaos which prevailed in the matter of rationing and food supplies.

I also cannot aprpove of the reduced expenditure on account of education. Whatever the conditions of the country may be, expenditure on education should be reduced only as a last desperate resort. It is, however, welcome that some subsidies are going to be given to some private school teachers. I would like to impress on the Government that they should also contemplate subsidies to teachers in private schools and colleges in Calcutta who have been hard hit due to the mass exodus of students from Calcutta.

Apart from the observations which I have already made, I consider the budget as a good one, and I congratulate the Hon'ble Chief Minister for framing it, especially in view of the fact that he has been in charge of finance only for a short time. I find in his budget a sincere effort to face the critical situation which is followed in the wake of the war. The points which I have raised are meant to guide him and have not been directed by way of disparagement. I hope that the difficulties which I have pointed out will merit his sincere consideration.

Kazi EMDADUL HAQUE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I had no mind to speak at this tag-end of the day, but I find that I have been fortunate enough to catch your eye, and I must thank you for having given me an opportunity to speak. As you know, Sir, I sit here isolated and alone and therefore whatever I shall say now should be considered as my personal and individual opinion. Many a time I tried to follow the budget discussion, but I must confess and confess very frankly that I have not been able to satisfy myself so far as the budget estimates of the Government of Bengal are concerned. I must confess very frankly that I have not been able to satisfy myself with these figures and my impression is that it is unavailing and unprofitable. It has become almost a matter of formal nature and nothing else. I think the budget is not presented to invite our comments with a view to amend it in the light of the criticisms offered in this House. It is presented in a mere stereotyped form and it is a lifeless one. I do not mean the budget of this year only, but that was the case with all its predecessors also. I call the budget a lifeless one because it does not envisage any scheme for the good of the common people, the poor masses of the country, the people who are the progenitors of wealth and whose wealth has been employed in different channels. Although the common people supply the sinews of Government funds, yet they are neglected.

Sir, I have been in this Legislature for well over three decades, but during these long years Government have not accepted any of the recommendations that we in this House put forward in the course of our budget speeches. Whenever any demand is made for any scheme for the uplift of the poorer masses in the countryside, Government express regret and

always plead inability on account of want of funds. That is the only plea put forward every time whenever any popular demand is made for the uplift of the masses. Money is found always wanting to implement any such scheme, but money is always available to implement even a big scheme, a scheme which is abortive and a scheme which is imaginary. Only they do not find money for the uplift of the poorer classes whom they ought to look after for if they had not supplied money, Government would have been a failure. Whenever an honourable member who is most favourite to Government puts forward a case, Government find money for it; they discover avenues of income either by taxation or by any other means although they know perfectly well that the brunt of this taxation ultimately falls on the poorer classes. Government raise money in order to implement some schemes of their own which may not be profitable to all, but if they are asked to do anything in the interests of the peasantry, they cannot do it because money is always wanting. But if they have only the will, they can find money. There are ways and means by which they can tackle this matter. If they want really to do something which might be in the interest of the people, they can do it by various means We may suggest the means. By reducing the administration costs they can do it, and if they want to do it, they should first start from themselves If they choose to take lesser pay than what they are getting now, enough money will be found. In the Congress provinces, the Ministers used to take Rs. 500. If the Ministers here claim to be progressive and if they also agree to take Rs. 500 a month, they could release at least Rs. 3 lakhs in that way. If they take Rs. 500 and if they are satisfied with this small salary and if the salary of the Speaker could also be reduced to that amount, it would yield at least Rs. 3 lakhs. Then they could also ask other Government officers to make some sacrifice so as to help in doing good to the people

(At this stage the member having reached the time-limit resumed his seat.)

Mr. UPENDRANATH EDBAR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have got the budget estimate for the 1943-44 which was placed before the House the other day and along with it the statement of the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq, Chief Minister and Minister for Finance. I have gone through the statement, but it is very short and brief in comparison with other years' statements. I think it is due to economy in paper or due to lack of comprehensive schemes.

At the very outset of the statement, the Minister for Finance has stated the fact that "the war has come very close indeed to Bengal" and it is natural that the war-time budget would be different from peace-time budgets. But what do we find in it? We are hopelessly disappointed to find that this budget is a stereotyped one. He has not attempted to evolve out any scheme for increasing the wealth of poor Bengal, but, on the other hand, he has gone on taxing the people of Bengal with further taxes to meet the cost of his top-heavy administration by introducing new Finance Bills from year to year.

There is no denying the fact that Bengal has been rendered poor and her poverty has been much more aggravated by the abnormal rise in the prices of foodstuffs and other essential commodities of life. The policy of the present Government to give relief to the people of Bengal in these days of economic crisis has been an utter failure. They have no well-planned and comprehensive schemes of their own. Hence this failure is inevitable. Nowadays rice sells at Rs. 14 to Rs. 16 per maund or more. Some people in Barisal which is called the granary of Bengal had to go without food for one or two days for want of rice even in the month of *Pous* last. How horrible it is! Please think within yourselves the gravity of the situation into which we the people of Bengal shall be dragged in the days of scarcity which is likely to happen in the months of June to November, 1943.

We find in the budget mention of a new department, namely, the Directorate of Civil Supplies, which has been set up for solving the food problem. Has it been in any way helpful to the public? Has it been successful in controlling supplies although much money under this head has been drained off? I am of opinion that had there been no such control of supplies the people could live more comfortably than they are doing now. Control of supplies of this nature has rather caused a great panic among the public and as a result they have hoarded up at a time what they do not want for the present. Hence shortage of supplies is felt throughout the length and breadth of this province.

As regards the nation-building departments, we find no improvements whatsoever. Let us discuss the nation-building departments one by one.

Agriculture.—This year's total grant is Rs. 52,30,000 (voted as well as charged). This is no doubt a sufficient grant for the purpose, but it is a matter of great regret that the public of Bengal is not in the least benefited by this as it seems to me. Agricultural Demonstration Farms are not rendering the services which were expected of them. It would have been better for the cultivators had there been any arrangements for them to get training at least for three months in these farms.

Veterinary.—A sum of Rs. 8,12,000 has been budgeted under this head. It is certainly not a paltry sum. Cattle is a sort of wealth to the cultivators—not only to the cultivators but in former days it was regarded as a great wealth even by the kings of this country. There being no sufficient arrangement for the treatment and preservation of cattle, diseases occur among the cattle in the rural areas and the difficulties of the poor cultivators know no bounds when cattle disease breaks out in an epidemic form. So I suggest that there should be veterinary hospitals established at least in every union if it is not possible in every thana.

Medical and Public Health.—A very big sum has been budgeted this year for the above purposes. But we gain nothing, there being no comprehensive schemes for it. Most of the money is spent on the maintenance of office staff and a small amount is spent for the furtherance of public causes.

Industries.—The total estimate for the coming year's budget under this head is Rs. 17,84,000. It is a little higher than the previous year's provision. Agricultural Bengal cannot now pay what we need for our daily necessities. So, it is desirable that agricultural Bengal should now be industrialised like other countries in the world.

Education (General).—I have nothing to say as regards the General Education Grant as it has already been criticised by other members. But as I belong to one of the Scheduled Castes of Bengal, I should like to discuss the subject of Scheduled Caste Education Fund. When the Fund was first created, we got a sum of Rs. 5,00,000 for the advancement of the education of members of the Scheduled Castes. That sum as well as the annual grant of Rs. 1,50,000 has well-nigh been spent up. We demanded more money for our education from year to year, but the so-called popular Government has been consistently and persistently turning a deaf ear to our demand. Thus our just and reasonable demands are being ignored at the hands of the present Government. Besides this, our reasonable demands for appointment of another Schedule Caste Minister in the Cabinet has been deferred from day to day and it has not been fulfilled up till now. Now we hear that the present control is helpless in expanding the Cabinet by the appointment of another Scheduled Caste Minister. For argument's sake we hold that it is true we could sympathise with the present Cabinet in their utter helpless and forlorn condition, had our other demands been fulfilled and various interests safeguarded. What do we find now? We are doomed under the present Cabinet. Our interests are not looked into, our entreaties not paid heed to. So, I sound a note of warning to the present Cabinet that if our just and reasonable demands are not satisfied and if various other interests are not safeguarded as they ought to be, it will be very difficult for us all to put up with this situation any longer. With these few words, I resume my seat.

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am thankful to you for the opportunity you have given me to participate in the general discussion of the budget today. Sir, the budget which has been presented before the House is a deficit budget. We find that the revenue receipt for the year 1943-44 has been estimated to be Rs. 16 crores 2 lakhs and the revenue expenditure as Rs. 17 crores 55 lakhs. Thus we have a deficit of Rs. 1 crore and 53 lakhs. In the year 1941-42 there was a deficit of Rs. 56 lakhs and in the year 1942-43 according to the budget estimate the deficit was to be Rs. 1 crore and 5 lakhs, but that figure was subsequently altered in the revised budget to Rs. 1 crore and 54 lakhs. This was in spite of the receipt of more than Rs. 1 crore on account of the proceeds from Sales Tax, Raw Jute Taxation Act and Motor Spirit Taxation Act. Over and above that the Hon'ble the Finance Minister who happens to be the Chief Minister as well as the Home Minister has stated in his speech that Bengal would stand indebted for about Rs. 4 crores to the Government of India. Thus in my opinion the budget is nothing but a gloomy budget. The great discredit for this budget goes to the ex-Finance Minister, the then Hon'ble Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee, as well as to the present Finance Minister who

is also the Chief Minister. Who knows how long such a deficit budget would haunt us? I congratulate the Hon'ble Finance Minister on the clever manner in which he has prepared his budget. Sir, it is an utterly hopeless budget and is absolutely disappointing. The Finance Minister has tried to take shelter under the war situation for the various deficiencies and has tried to make people understand that it is in the nature of a war budget as Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee said in the course of his budget speech in presenting his budget last year. I respectfully differ from him as the budget is not in the nature of even a shadow of a war budget. It is a pernicious document, pernicious to the human beings and pernicious to the nation. If we look at the Receipts side under the head "Excise" for the current year we find that it is Rs. 2,30 lakhs whereas last year and the year before last it was Rs. 1,82 lakhs and Rs. 1,75 lakhs respectively. This shows an improvement on the side of receipts by Rs. 48 lakhs last year and Rs. 55 lakhs the year before last. This improvement is due to what? This is, as the Hon'ble Finance Minister has said, attributable to the larger consumption of country spirit, wines, liquors, opium, *ganja*, etc. Is it, as has been said, due to the influx into this province of large numbers of non-Bengalee labourers, evacuees and camp followers addicted to liquor? This is suggested as a plea for this improvement in Excise revenue. This process is nothing but a man-killing device. Far from slowing down it is being increased by leaps and bounds every year. Income under this head was Rs. 1,35 lakhs in 1933-34 and in the course of ten years it has now risen up to Rs. 2,30 lakhs, *i.e.*, Rs. 95 lakhs more than what it was ten years ago. Is it not strange? I congratulate both the Hon'ble Mr. Fazlul Huq and the ex-Finance Minister Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee on their performance. What else can Bengal expect in the present state of affairs? Is the people's interest safe?

There is no new attempt for bettering the lot of the province. This is an old stereotyped budget. The valuable maxim, "The old order changeth yielding place to the new," is far away from their conception and it could not touch them.

Sir, next the attitude of the present Ministry to adult education, free primary education to the boys as well as free primary education to the girls has been a bluff to the nation. The history of adult education is a most pitiable factor. For it Rs. 92,000 was budgeted last year of which nothing was spent. In the year before last also Rs. 92,000 was provided in the budget of which Rs. 5,000 only was spent, and the remaining Rs. 87,000 was not utilised pending formulation of a suitable scheme. Damn their such plea of scheme which would take an age to be prepared while the nation itself is on the very verge of ruin for want of it. They are callous and indifferent. There was a Free Primary and Adult Education Committee some six years ago, but its report is not out. What for? Only to shelve the matter. Mr. Fazlul Huq knows better. There is absolutely no dispute about the urgent necessity of adult education either inside or outside of this House.

It is an undeniable fact that the whole point of nation-building nay nation-saving, hinges upon this to a great extent, but still the callousnes and indifference of the Ministry to it amounts to, I shall say, almost crimina negligence. This year for adult education they have budgeted what? A cypher. Will the Hon'ble Chief Minister be pleased to declare on the floo of the House that he and his Ministry will no longer play hide-and-seek policy with regard to adult education and with right earnest take up the cause? What will they say? What can we expect from the present Ministry? Absolutely nothing.

(At this stage the member having reached the time-limit resumed his seat.)

Adjournment.

The House was adjourned at 6-48 p.m. till 3-45 p.m. on Tuesday, the 23rd February, 1943, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Tuesday, the 23rd February, 1943, at 3-45 p.m.

Present:

Mr. Deputy Speaker (MR. SYED JALALUDDIN HASHEMY) in the Chair, 7 Hon'ble Ministers and 184 members.

STARRED QUESTION

(to which an oral answer was given)

Enemy Broadcasts and Government action to counteract these.

*58. (SHORT NOTICE) **Mr. YUSUF MIRZA:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department aware—

(*i*) of the Berlin Radio report in which it was alleged that the British Armed Police opened fire on the 1st and 2nd February upon the students of the Dacca University singing "*Bande Mataram*" at a meeting with the result that a number of them had been injured;

(*ii*) of enemy broadcast from Saigon, dated the 5/6th February, in which it was alleged that a demonstration of nationalists in front of the Chief Minister's residence was dispersed by a police *lathi* charge; and

(*iii*) of large number of assertions made by enemy radio stations, particularly German and Japanese, regarding conditions prevailing in Eastern India and Bengal?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether there is any truth in the allegations referred to in (*a*) (*i*) and (*ii*)?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is considering the desirability of taking steps for publication of—

(*i*) actual facts, if any, connected with the said incidents; and

(*ii*) prompt denials wherever necessary and desirable?

MINISTER in charge of the HOME DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) Regarding (*a*) (*i*), I wish to point out that the report is without any foundation. The only foundation for such a report apparently was the objection that was taken by some students to the singing of the song by others and the scuffle which followed among the two groups of students.

Regarding (*ii*), I wish to point out that the story is completely without foundation.

(*c*) Regarding (*c*) (*i*), I should like to state that the reports are so palpably wrong that I do not consider it necessary to give further publicity to the actual facts.

Regarding (*ii*), I should like to state that the enemy broadcasts about conditions in India are absurd and carry their own condemnation. The people of the Province are intelligent enough not to attach any credit to them. As such no further action is necessary.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state who heard this Berlin Radio for which a question has been put to the Hon'ble Minister in charge?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: It is not I who put this question, and so I do not know.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Sir, the Hon'ble Minister admits in his reply to question (*a*) that he is aware of enemy broadcasts.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I heard to that effect, but I cannot mention from whom.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what were the actual facts mentioned or referred to, relating to which these broadcasts emanated?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: As I have said, I did not hear anything myself and so the facts I cannot give. But if the question is put as a regular question, I will try to ascertain the facts.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the information noted in answer regarding (*a*)(*c*) is correct that there was any fighting between two sections of students?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I do not know, Sir. The answer I have given is the official information received.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that two sections of students fought over the singing of *Bande Mataram* at Dacca as referred to in question (*a*)(*c*)?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am not aware. The answer I have given, as I have already said, is the official information received.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is there no official information that there was fighting between two sections of students at Dacca over the singing of *Bande Mataram*?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: No, I have not got. But if the honourable member so desires, I can collect information.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, may I make my question more clear? My question is: Is the Hon'ble the Chief Minister aware that actually

there was a fight between two sections of students in the Dacca University over the question of singing of *Bande Mataram* in a lady students' function at Dacca?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Lady or no lady, I have already answered that a scuffle followed among the two groups of students.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Whether it was over the question of singing of *Bande Mataram*?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Apparently it was.

Mr. K. NOORUDDIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the Government is taking step to stop the enemy from making such broadcasts? (Laughter.)

(No reply.)

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if any attempt is being made by the British Broadcasting Corporation or the All-India Radio to issue correct information and thereby seek to dispel public feeling regarding false information given by the enemy?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That is a request for action, but it contains a valuable suggestion which I am prepared to consider.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(answers to which were laid on the table)

Conversion of the Dacca Medical School into a College.

16. Mr. PRATUL CHANDRA GANGULI: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state whether the Government are considering the desirability of establishing a Medical College in Dacca?

(*b*) Is it a fact that the Government is contemplating to convert the Dacca Government Medical School into a Medical College?

(*c*) Have the Government come to any decision regarding the establishment of a Medical College in Dacca?

(*d*) Is there any possibility of the Medical College being established by the beginning of the next year?

(*e*) If the answer to (*d*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when the College is likely to be established?

MINISTER in charge of the PUBLIC HEALTH AND LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu): The honourable member is referred to the reply given to starred question No. 41 on the 19th February, 1943.

Remission of rent in Khasmahal areas, Contai.

17. Mr. ISWAR CHANDRA MAL: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the major portion of the paddy crops of certain areas under the Contai Khasmahal in the district of Midnapore has been damaged by the cyclone and the tidal bores occurring in the month of October, 1942?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of remitting the rents of the tenants for this year?

MINISTER in charge of the REVENUE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee): Yes.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the under-tenants of these khas mahal tenancies are entitled to the same concession of remission as the tenants themselves?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Government is considering the whole matter.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

(When held-over question No. *21 was called, the following debate took place.)

Mr. ABDULA-AL MAHMOOD: Why not from *13, Sir?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have just received a letter from the Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur of Dacca which states that he is still ill and considering the importance of his questions he has requested me to hold over his questions till his return. He has also said in that letter that he will be able to attend meetings in four or five days' time.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Was the letter handed over to you, Sir, personally?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have got it through a messenger.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: May we know, Sir, what is the nature of the illness he has been suffering from?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I do not know, but I have been told that he is really ill.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Sir, the Nawab Bahadur must have been suffering from a peculiar malady. He can be seen every evening at the cinema house, but he is reported to be sick and is unable to come to this House.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: A Minister can, however, delegate his functions to any of his colleagues or to a Parliamentary Secretary who can

answer the questions standing in his name. But you insisted the other day that these questions should be answered by the Nawab Bahadur himself, and accordingly I proposed that these questions, considering their importance, should be held over so that the Nawab Bahadur himself might answer them.

Realisation of subscription from boat-owners of Gouripur, Tippera.

*21. **Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMAD:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Defence) Department be pleased to state the number of country boats—

(1) seized, and
(2) purchased

by the Government under the Defence of India Rules at Gouripur Bazar in Tippera?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any subscription was realised from the owners of such boats?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(1) the purpose for which it was spent;
(2) the amount realised for the purpose;
(3) the agency that collected the amount;
(4) whether any receipt was given for the amount collected;
(5) whether any amount was collected without receipt; and
(6) the process adopted in realising the amount?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) (1) and (2) 2,437.

(*b*) Yes, but not by Government officials and not in the boat office.

(*c*) (1) Collected for the newly started Gouripur High English School, but not spent as yet.

(2) Rs. 3,248-4.

(3) The Secretary and a member of the Managing Committee.

(4) Yes.

(5) No.

(6) The boat-owners contributed voluntarily.

Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMED: With reference to answer (*b*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state where these subscriptions were realised?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Anywhere but not in Government office and boat office.

Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMED: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state where the Government boat office is located?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I have no idea.

Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMED: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state why these boat-owners paid these subscriptions?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ It is a voluntary action on their part and it is for them to answer.

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he received any representation from one of the responsible members of the Coalition Party to the effect that subscriptions were exacted from the boat-owners by the Secretary of the Managing Committee?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I do not remember having received any such representation, but if such an allegation is made, I am prepared to hold an enquiry through the proper channel.

Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMED: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state if it is a fact that Mr. Syed Golam Sarwar Hosaini, a member of the Progressive Coalition Party, sent a wire to the Chief Minister saying that bribery was riding rampant and he drew the attention of the Chief Minister to it?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That is everywhere the case. I do not remember having received any such telegram from Mr. Syed Golam Sarwar Hosaini.

Mr. SHAHEDALI: With reference to answer (*h*), will the Hon'ble Minister please mention the names of the Secretary and another member who was in charge of realising subscriptions on behalf of the Managing Committee?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: It does not appear from the papers before me, but if the names are wanted, I will supply them.

Mr. SHAHEDALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether these subscriptions were realised before the payment of the money for boats?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I cannot answer that question.

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state if it is not a fact that those who paid or were compelled to pay subscriptions got higher prices for their boats?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: So many questions are being asked. I shall enquire into the matter and if honourable members do not hear any statement from me in a fortnight's time, I shall be obliged if they remind me of it.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: The Hon'ble Minister has said that collections are not made in Government office or in the boat office. Has he got any information at what places the collections are made?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That he has already said.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: He said in a negative way. Has he got any positive information as to the places where money is collected?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: No, Sir, I have not. I have promised to look into the matter and when I get the information, I will inform the House.

Mr. SHAHEDALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether the Circle Officer, Daudkandi, is the Boat Officer and also a member of the School Committee?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I cannot say.

Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMED: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state if it is a fact that there is a criminal case under section 428, Indian Penal Code, pending against the Circle Officer and some other persons?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I have no information.

Applicability of Rules of Jail Code to security prisoners.

*24. **Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Jails) Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether security prisoners are amenable in all respects to the Rules in the Jail Code; and

(*ii*) whether communications with and correspondence to and from these prisoners are controlled and censored by the District Police?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*)(*ii*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state under what authority they do so?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to lay on the Table a copy of the rules and regulations and procedure governing such communications and correspondence?

(*d*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether security prisoners are classified; and

(*ii*) whether the Rules in Chapters XXXVI and XXXVIII of the Bengal Jail Code, 7th edition, apply to security prisoners?

(*e*) If not, what are the rules that govern them?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) (*i*) No.

(*a*) (*ii*) and (*b*) I refer the honourable member to the provisions of rule 25 of the Bengal Security Prisoners Rules, a copy of which is placed in the Library.

(*c*) A copy of the Bengal Security Prisoners Rules, 1940, has already been placed in the Library.

(*d*) No.

(*e*) The Bengal Security Prisoners Rules, 1940.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be astonished to hear that there is no copy of the Bengal Security Prisoners Rules, 1940, in the Library?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I wanted to have a copy and was informed that my esteemed friend, Dr. Sanyal, has taken away the only copy that we possess and it is in his possession now.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I make that admission, but I did not steal it away. I took it, for as a member I am entitled to take out books.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state why, after hearing that there was no such copy in the Library, he was not pleased to supply the Library with another copy?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: It was in the Library, and I did not know when my friend took it away.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Long before, not today in any case.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I made enquiry and I was told that my friend had taken it away. I will try to have one or two more copies.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that the copy which was in the Library and which has been taken out by me on loan—as I am entitled to—is not the latest copy or the corrected up-to-date copy of the Security Prisoners Rules which apply to security prisoners at the present moment?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I confess I have not seen the rules yet.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state when this copy was supplied to the Library?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I cannot answer that question.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is it a fact that the Library copy bears the date 23rd September, 1941?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: My honourable friend is reading from something and he knows more than I do.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that after September, 1941, a number of amendments were made in the Security Prisoners Rules?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Most certainly.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state if those amendments were supplied to the Library?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That I cannot say.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, we are rather in an awkward position. On the last occasion the very same question was asked and attention of the Chief Minister was drawn to it. In view of that you were pleased to state that the question be held over as the House wanted to see the up-to-date copy.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The only information I can give you is that we have also written to Government to send us a corrected up-to-date copy.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: So the reply given even now stands on the basis of the old anti-dated copy. With reference to answer (*a*)(*ii*)

regarding communications, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is not a fact that inordinate delay takes place in arranging interviews and communications with security prisoners through the Deputy Inspector-General, Intelligence Branch and Special Branch Department, Calcutta?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Yes, delays take place.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he has received any representations or petitions or complaints requesting him to see that such delays may be avoided?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Yes, I have received representations.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what action has been taken?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I have asked the Deputy Secretary of the department to look into these matters, and I have not yet received any report. Endeavours will be made to see that avoidable delays do not occur.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: On a point of information, Sir. I want to know what right the Hon'ble Minister has to refer to any book in the Library which is not his property?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: How am I to know that the book has been taken away?

Srijut MANINDRA BHUSAN SINHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if letters and communications to the Ministers even are censored and held over by the Intelligence Branch Department?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Yes, that is a fact.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answer (*d*), that is, the security prisoners are not classified, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the present arrangement for classification of security prisoners for political or alleged political offences and security prisoners who are termed as criminal security prisoners?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I would like to have time to answer this question. I cannot answer it now. I have got no material before me.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: In that case let this question be held over again.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Yes. But, Sir, may I point out that questions are being held over——

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Not for our fault.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I know that questions are being held over not for your fault. I would like to say that in order that

the question may not indefinitely be held over, I shall be glad if the honourable member reminds me from time to time, so that I may try to give answers as early as possible.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Just in view of the answer given by the Hon'ble Minister to the question of Mr. Sinha that the letters written to the Hon'ble Ministers are censored (the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Not all) are we to understand that the petitions made to the Hon'ble Minister by the security prisoners complaining against the misrules and other things in the jail are also censored and may be stopped by the Intelligence Branch?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Not necessarily.

Mr. I. D. JALAN: On a point of information, Sir. Is the reminding business to be done by the members or by the Secretary?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is a request from the Hon'ble Chief Minister and it is up to the members to decide what they will do.

(When Starred question No. 25 was called out.)

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: With regard to question No. 25 a reference has been made to the notifications published in the *Calcutta Gazette*, but it is not possible for the members to collect the notifications and find out what are the places in which the collective fines have been imposed. You, Sir, told us that notifications will be collected and a reference will be made. The question was: "In how many places in Bengal the Government has imposed collective fines?"

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let us hear the answer first.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: The answer was read the other day.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: On a previous occasion I remember that this question or a similar question came up and reference was given to the notifications in the *Calcutta Gazette*, and I was asked in view of the reference to notifications to give the substance of the notifications themselves. In that view of the matter I shall give to the House the notifications themselves.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Will the notifications be placed before the members on the floor of the House or may we take it that they will be placed on the Library table?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Yes, that can be done. The notifications can be placed on the Library table.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, it will be convenient both for the Ministers as well as for the members if a table is made out with notification number given on the left, the index and the place regarding the notification, the total amount of collective fines imposed, the total amount realised so far as mentioned in the question itself. Sir, the question is, "In how many places in Bengal the Government has imposed collective fines, and the

amount imposed and realised in each place?" It will help both the Minister as well as the member concerned if my suggestion is accepted. May I also request you, Sir, to see that the answer is given up to date? Because by the time the answer will be given if there are further notifications, they should also be included.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: All right.

(The question was held over.)

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: May I also suggest that as the question has been held over, will you kindly ask the Hon'ble the Chief Minister to give us the amount of fine imposed and realised in each place?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is already suggested by Dr. Sanyal.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Thank you, Sir.

Enquiries about held-over questions.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Sir, may I refer to Starred question No. 17 which was held over? You promised yesterday that all the held-over questions will be answered today

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: They will be taken up tomorrow.

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: Sir, there are some other questions which were also held over

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: They will also come up either tomorrow or the day after.

(Srijut Narendra Nath Das Gupta rose to speak.)

Mr. DAMBER SINGH GURUNG: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I want to draw your attention to the held-over question No. 14——

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It will be taken up tomorrow and not today.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, he was inviting your attention to one other held-over question relating to a department the Minister concerned of which is himself present. That related to the distribution of some country liquor shop—I mean excise vending contract in Kalimpong.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: With regard to Starred question No. 14 it was shown in today's agenda by mistake. It will not be taken up today; it will be taken up tomorrow.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Can it not be taken up today? The Minister concerned is also present.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have already said that the questions are over. It will be taken up tomorrow.

GENERAL DISCUSSION OF THE BUDGET.

Srijut NARENDRA NATH DAS GUPTA: Deputy Speaker, Sir, আজ এই বাজেট প্রসঙ্গে আমি প্রথমে বলতে চাই যে Progressive Coalition Party গঠনের সময়

Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq একটী বিবৃতি প্রদান করেন এবং সঙ্গে সঙ্গে তখনকার Hon'ble Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerji মহাশয়ও একটী বিবৃতি প্রদান করেন। তখন Hon'ble Fazlul Huq সাহেব বলেছিলেন যে তিনি হিন্দুদের সমস্ত মঙ্গলের বিষয়ে মনোযোগ দিবেন এবং হিন্দুদের সম্বন্ধে দায়িত্ব নিবেন এবং ডাক্তার শ্যামাপ্রসাদ মুখার্জী বলেছিলেন যে তিনি মুসলমানদের মঙ্গল দেখ্‌বেন এবং তাঁদের দায়িত্ব নিবেন। সেই বিবৃতি অনুসারে ঢাকাতে হিন্দু মুসলমান দাঙ্গা হওয়ায় যে পরিস্থিতির উদ্ভব হয়েছিল তাতে ঢাকার সমস্ত মামলা মোকদ্দমা প্রত্যাহার করা হয়, শুধু টাউনের নয়, মফঃস্বলেরও যেখানে হিন্দুরাই মাত্র বিপন্ন হয়, তাদের গৃহ লুণ্ঠিত ও ভস্মীভূত হয়, নারীদের উপর অত্যাচার হয়, নরহত্যা হয়,—তেমন হাজার হাজার মোকদ্দমা প্রত্যাহার করা হয়। এ বিষয়ে ডাক্তার শ্যামাপ্রসাদ মুখার্জী মুসলমানদের পক্ষ থেকে তাদের মঙ্গলের জন্য শুধু তাঁর প্রতিশ্রুতি রক্ষা করেন নি, সেই প্রতিশ্রুতি রক্ষা করতে যেয়ে হিন্দু সমাজের বিশেষভাবে সমালোচনার পাত্র হয়েছিলেন। যে সমস্ত স্থান লুণ্ঠিত হয়েছিল সে সমস্ত সম্বন্ধে ফজলুল হক সাহেবের নিকট হ'তে মন্ত্রিসভার পক্ষে এই আশ্বাস দেওয়া হয়েছিল যে হিন্দুদের বাড়ীঘর তুলে দেওয়া হবে, এবং ক্ষতিপূরণ করা হবে। কিন্তু দুঃখের বিষয় এই যে সেই হিন্দুদের উপর যারা অত্যাচার করেছিল তারা খালাস পেয়ে গেল কিন্তু হিন্দুদের কাছ থেকে টাকা আদায় করার জন্য পরোয়ানা বার হয়েছে বোলে আমাদের কাছে সংবাদ রয়েছে। তাদের যে সমস্ত লোন্ দেওয়া হয়েছিল তা আদায় করা হবে। এ সম্বন্ধে রাজস্বসচিব মহাশয়ের কি বলার আছে শুন্‌তে চাই।

দ্বিতীয় কথা—কালকের বক্তৃতা প্রসঙ্গে তমিজুদ্দীন সাহেব বলেছিলেন যে এই বর্ত্তমান মন্ত্রি-সভার আমলে মুসলমানদের প্রাণে ব্যথা দিয়ে হিন্দুরা শোভাযাত্রা প্রভৃতি নিয়ে যেতে পারবে। কিন্তু ব্যাপারটা ঠিক তার উল্টো। পূর্ব্বের মন্ত্রিসভায় হিন্দুদের শোভাযাত্রা যে বাধার জন্য নিয়ে যেতে পারত না কোন কোন জায়গায় আবার সেই মন্ত্রিসভার দ্বারাই সেই বাধা অপসারিত হয়েছে, এবং গান বাদ্য নিয়ে হিন্দুদের যেতে দেওয়া হয়েছে। কিন্তু বর্ত্তমান মন্ত্রিসভার আমলে দিনাজপুরে এক বছরের মতন, বজবজে এক বছরের মতন সমস্ত শোভাযাত্রা বন্ধ হয়ে পড়ে রইল এবং অনারেব্‌ল্ ফজলুল হক সাহেব সেই শোভাযাত্রা পরিচালনার জন্য কিছুই করতে পারলেন না। দিনাজপুরে যে শোভাযাত্রা যেতে পেরেছিল সে হিন্দু মুসলমানের পরস্পরের মিলিত সর্ত্তের মধ্য দিয়ে সম্ভব হয়েছিল। তারপরে তমিজুদ্দিন সাহেব বলে গেলেন যে গান বাদ্য শোভা-যাত্রা নিয়ে গেলে মুসলমানের প্রাণে ব্যথা লাগে কিন্তু তাঁকে জানাতে চাই যে আজমীরে চিস্তী সাহেবের যে বড় মসজিদ আছে সেখানে দিনরাত গান বাজনা হয়।

আর একটা কথা হচ্ছে এই যে আমরা একথা জান্‌তে চাই বর্ত্তমান গভর্ণমেণ্টের কাছ থেকে যে হিন্দু ধর্ম্মের অধিকারের বিষয় ক্ষুণ্ণ করা হবে না অন্য সম্প্রদায়ের অন্যায় জিদ বা অন্যায় আব্‌দারের নিকট। তার পর কথা হচ্চে কালকার এই সভায় অনেকে A. R. P. সম্পর্কে অনেক সমালোচনা কোরেছেন। A. R. P. তে মুসলমান বেশী আসুক কি হিন্দু বেশী আসুক সেটা বড় কথা নয়, কিন্তু বড় কথা হচ্চে কলিকাতা নগরীকে রক্ষা করবার জন্য যারা এগিয়ে আসবে সকলের আগে তাদের নিতে হবে। A. R. P. তে যখন ভলাণ্টিয়ার আহ্বান করা হয় তখন দুর্ভাগ্যের বিষয় হউক বা সৌভাগ্যের বিষয় হউক হিন্দুরা ভলাণ্টিয়ার কোরেছিল তখন মুসলমানেরা কোরেছিল কিনা তার উত্তর তাঁরাই দেবেন। তারপর যখন চাকরীর কথা এল, মাহিনা করা হ'ল, তখন যাঁরা A. R. P. তে ছিলেন তাঁদের সকলকে দেওয়া হল, সেখানে হিন্দু-মুসলমান বুদ্ধিতে দেওয়া হয় নি।

তারপর মুসলমান সম্প্রদায়ের কাছ থেকে যখন দাবী করা হ'ল সে দাবী গভর্ণমেণ্ট স্বীকার কোরে নিয়েছেন। দাবী এই যে পরে appointment হ'লে সেখানে মুসলমান এবং Scheduled Caste নেওয়া হবে। কাজেই এখানে গভর্ণমেণ্ট কোন অন্যায় করেন নি। তার পর রান্না-শালার যা ব্যবস্থা করা হয়েছে তাতে শতকরা ৫০।৫০ সেখানে নিয়োগ করা হবে। আমি সেখানে গভর্ণমেণ্টের দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ কর্‌চি যে জনসংখ্যা অনুসারে হিন্দুর আলাদা রান্না ঘর করা হউক এবং মুসলমানদের আলাদা করা হউক তাদের প্রয়োজন অনুসারে। হিন্দুরা মুসলমানের রান্না খাবেন না এবং মুসলমানেরাও অনেক জায়গায় হিন্দুর রান্না খান না। সেখানে যদি শতকরা ৫০।৫০ করা হয় তবে ধর্ম্মের উপর হস্তক্ষেপ করা হবে।

তারপর আর একটী বিষয়ের প্রতি দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ কর্‌চি। বন্যাবিধ্বস্ত অঞ্চলে, সুতাহাটা থানায় যারা হিন্দু পোষ্টাল গার্ড তারা সেখানে আগষ্ট মাস থেকে অর্থাৎ আন্দোলনের পর থেকে মাহিনা পায় নি। Communal বোলে হিন্দুদের মাহিনা দেওয়া হয় নি। এ বিষয়ে আমি Home Minister মহাশয়ের দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ কর্‌চি।

তারপর আমি বল্‌চি যে ভারতবর্ষে হিন্দুমুসলমান সকলকে মিলে মিশে থাকতে হবে। এখানে আমরা যদি পাকিস্থানের ধুয়া তুলে কাজ কর্‌তে যাই তাহলে ব্রিটিশ গভর্ণমেণ্টেরই সুবিধা হবে। ব্রিটিশ গভর্ণমেণ্ট তার স্বার্থ না হ'লে পাকিস্থান দেবে না। যেখানে সুবিধা হবে সেখানে পাকিস্থান দেবে। পালেষ্টাইনে ব্রিটিশ গভর্ণমেণ্ট ত আরবদের পাকিস্থান দিয়েছিল। আরব মুসলমানেরা বুকের রক্ত দিয়ে সেই পাকিস্থানের বিরুদ্ধে যুদ্ধ কোরেছে। ঠিক তেম্‌নি ভাবে ভারতবর্ষে মুসলমানের যা স্বার্থ তা কখন দেখ্‌বে না।

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is not in the least unusual that when a ruthless enemy is at our gates we shall be called upon to bear a heavy financial burden, but what is most unusual, however, is that it should be a burden, not of defence but of utter waste. The Bengal Budget strikingly reveals an impress of the dictates and commandments from above which the Ministry in this province appears powerless to ignore. The Imperialistic Government isolated from all political parties from nationalists, from Hindus, from Muslims, from Indian Christians, from Sikhs and even from Liberals tries to prosecute a total war, tries to oppose a total war in total indifference to the entire wishes of the people of India. The all-in co-operation and heart-felt solidarity of all Indians necessary to defeat and destroy the ruthless enemy seeks its substitute in a tangled mass of departments and of incompetent, if not sinecure, departmental directors, conceived in a spirit of rotten, putrid bureaucracy and of red-tapism. The Hon'ble the Chief Minister has referred to the great victories of the Red Army. Do I have to remind him that these victories were not won by officialism and departmentalism? Does he not know that the real success is due to the solidarity, unity, moral conviction and also the absolute confidence that the Russians have in their hitherto much-maligned Soviet Government? If he does not, I need only remind him about Stalingrad: how amazingly Stalingrad stood its seige! How the steel and concrete of that steel city of Stalingrad was battered and blasted by the guns and bombers, and yet they withstood the seige! This was not done by the superiority in material resources, but this was due to the patriotic consciousness of the Russians in the cause for which they were

fighting. It is this very consciousness amongst the Indians that our Imperialist criminals at New Delhi and at Whitehall are killing. They do not realise that without that they cannot possibly fight this total war. They are sticking to a position for which they are unfit: They are sticking to an authority to which they have no moral claim: and over and above that they are pursuing a policy of economic repression and a greater policy of political repression. I shall presently illustrate the position by referring to the increased expenditure in the budget. An instance of callous waste of public money is the expenditure on Home Guards and the Civic Guards. The Civic Guards, as everyone knows in this House, consists of many ruffians and social scums who have never done any public service before and are not expected to do any in future. The Home Guards organisation is also a most ridiculous one. It is very well to borrow catching names from the British. But does the Hon'ble Minister know that the Home Guard organisation in Britain consists of a well-drilled and well-trained force who can take up the place of the regular army in protecting the British homeland? On the other hand, the Home Guard here is not only a fake but consists of flatterers and pets. We know very well that when it comes to grim realities, when it comes to defend the homes of Bengal villages from ruthlessness and lawlessness of the enemy, no one including the Hon'ble the Chief Minister has any doubt that they will fail miserably.

Sir, the A.R.P. is another example of burreaucratic inefficiency. Highly paid officials with all their hierarchy of big and small officers present a very splendid picture indeed, but what is its real value? I know of many A.R.P. men who ran away no sooner there was declaration of war by the Japanese. If my information is correct, there were about 1,200 A.R.P. wardens on the rolls before the raids in the last Christmas Week, but when the raids came not even one-third of these 1,200 men turned up to do their duty (Mr. A. F. STARK: Question!) My friend has questioned. I may stand corrected I think it is either 1,205 or 1,105: I do not exactly remember the figure, but the persons who on an average turned up to do their duty were about 400 only. I should be very glad if my friend, Mr. Stark, would get into intimate touch with the people who are controlling the A.R.P. activities and corrects me after obtaining the actual facts.

Mr. A. F. STARK: Who were the 1,200? What services did they belong to?

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: Volunteer wardens. Out of about 1,200 volunteer wardens on the roll just before the Christmas Week only about one-third of the number turned up for duty during the air-raids. I ask, why is this so? It is mainly because of the policy of exclusion of persons with a patriotic urge. Today when heavy air-raids might come any day, the A.R.P. of all services should consist of men burning with the zeal of patriotism and prepared to face, if necessary, death in giving relief to others. But the Government has persistently followed a policy of exclusion. We know that the communist organisation and some student organisations thought it their patriotic duty to offer their services at this hour of peril, but—I shall be glad if I stand corrected—a private circular has been issued

by the A.R.P. Department instructing that persons belonging to political organisations are to be excluded. The communists are to be kept out and if some of them have already got in, they should be suspended or removed. This at a time when the public needs these services is most diabolical. May I acquaint the House through you, Sir, in confidence with a very interesting information that has reached me regarding the activities of the Civil Defence Department of the Government of Bengal? (The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: There is no such department.) I do not want to make my learned friend the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Civil Defence uneasy, but he will soon be entertained if he allows me to proceed. I understand some women have been recruited to do post-air-raid duties. Now, these women, I am told, are being trained in a quite different and entertaining way. I understand that 45 of these women have joined these post-air-raid duties. The authorities asked them to have a three-legged race with their supervisors. Only 3 out of these 45 responded to this mixed athletics. There was a very serious sequel, and I hope the Civil Defence Minister will enquire and find out whether it is true or not. One of these wardens of air-raid posts by name Safiulla as a result of this mixed athletics and entertainment got a public beating at the hands of his wife who came to that air-raid post. (Laughter.) So this is the ludicrous side of it

Sir, the expenditure on "Police" shows an inevitable increase, and I wonder what the provision of expenditure on "Additional Police" further means. The Hon'ble Chief Minister said in his speech that the police responded nobly to the occasion when the whole country was agitated by the repressions against the Congress. It is unthinkable that a popularly elected Minister should eulogise a service which has been and is still notorious all over India for its horrifying acts.

Lastly, I will refer to another expenditure on a department called the Department of Civil Supplies. The professed object of this department is to ensure a sufficient supply of food and other necessaries for the civil population of Bengal. Sir, if this is actually so, we are not very much aware of the existence and the activities of this department. Things are bad in Calcutta and things are worse in the muffassal. I find I have got the support of a big businessman like Mr. Ispahani in what I am stating. Lakhs of rupees of the poor tax-payers are being frittered away in this worthless hoax. I shall not further refer at length to the acute food problem which is being discussed separately in this House, but I agree with my learned friend Mr. Jalan who said that unless a well-planned scheme for supply and distribution can be put into effect, it is better to leave the matter to the trade to take its course and perhaps we shall be much better off.

I said there was an impress of the dictates from above. Another impress of the dictates we find when the Finance Minister says that there is also a new provision of a lakh for silk for defence purposes. May I tell him that this important matter is not only concerned with defence services, but it has an abiding interest for the people of this province. The prosperity of several districts of this province, viz., Malda, Murshidabad, Birbhum and its neighbouring districts depended upon the silk industry. This silk

industry was allowed to be decayed by the utter neglect of the Government. While Mysore and Kashmir Governments introduced improved cocoon rearing and improved silk filatures, our Government allowed the Bengal Silk Industry to be replaced by cheap Japanese, Italian and Chinese yarns. The result has been that there has been distress in these districts and people have lost their only means of livelihood. I am only regretting that even now our Government is not alert. The Central Government, I understand, has made a very substantial grant for Silk Research Institute—about Rs. 30,000 —and has undertaken to pay the recurring expenses and cost of equipments, but the Government of Bengal is not, I understand, utilising the grant by providing accommodation and land for locating this Research Institute. Can anything be more reprehensible than this? I want that Government will promptly utilise the opportunities and facilities that are offered to resuscitate this trade and to do good to the people.

Sir, I am aware that most of the criticisms I have offered refer to the Government of India, but I am helpless. I entirely agree with Mr. Gladding who pointed out yesterday that a good deal of the burden of expenditure due to war should be borne by the Central Government. The Bengal Government today is nothing but an agent of the Government of India—or should I say a tool—because an agent has some individuality, but the Bengal Government is acting as a mere tool. But is it not most regrettable that a Ministry depending on popular support should tamely submit to the ridiculous dictates and allow the rights and privileges of the people of this province to be crushed in this way? It is regrettable that when the enemy threatens us with another term of enslavement and when our very existence as a nation depends on real war efforts to defeat that enemy the Provincial Government should act as an instrument to the greatest saboteurs of war efforts. Today it is incumbent on the Ministers not to be ruled by their departmental Secretaries and by the police, but to rule them. If it is not possible, let them come out of office and unite and lead the nation to force real national war efforts from unwilling Imperialists and thus ensure the future freedom of the country.

A gloom has been cast all over the country while the greatest living Indian is suffering mortification of flesh, if not slow death, as a protest to——.

(The member having reached his time-limit resumed his seat.)

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the entire merit of the budget is disclosed in one sentence of the budget speech of the Hon'ble Minister at page 8. The closing balance of Rs. 1 crore and 54 lakhs includes nearly 4 crores of borrowed money. At page 11 under head "Additional Revenue" we read that our annual expenditure is now some 150 lakhs more than our revenue.

The following figures will be interesting. Total expenditure provided in the budget for 1942-43 is 35 crores. Behind the back of the legislature the whole policy was changed. Grants on nation-building departments were not utilized but we have been called upon to pass a revised budget of an

expenditure of 45 crores in place of 35 crores budgeted. The present budget is for 44 crores. We surmise that it will again be raised behind our back to 54 crores in February next.

Police head budget provided 248 lakhs. Revised demand is 268 lakhs. The present budget is for 271 lakhs.

Water, water everywhere, not a drop to drink,—the villagers exclaim.

I shall revert to it presently. Let me now discuss the food situation which is of vital importance.

Yesterday's morning papers said that the Government of India is going to import an expert to solve the food problem and the Bengal Government is following a policy of exporting food grains from Bengal. "Will not that counterbalance" is the curt question. Reply from our Chief is our demand. He won't hear me whether an expert is imported by the Government of India and he will go on exporting paddy and other commodities. Our chief asserts in his budget speech, "It will be height of folly to think that one could change overnight and without confusion from the haphazard distribution of peace time plenty to a system of distribution that aims at the most equitable and economical use of the supplies available." War broke out in 1939. Burma was taken in 1941. We were sleeping. We had no time. The problem is complex. To solve it overnight is impossible.

دریں عمر چہلسالی محقق شد بخاقانی
کہ نانی شد زوجۂ نانا و نانا شوہر نانی

While aged 40 khakani for the first time realised that Nani was the consort of Nana and Nana was the husband of Nani.

Our Chief has realised by now, as is exhibited in his budget speech, I quote his language "fixation of maximum prices by law was no solution of our problem: the effect was to drive supplies underground" Revelation came to him in July last. He could realise only then—to quote him again—that "the control of prices could not be made effective without control of supplies".

His speech is significant but his revelation has come too late—by the date Rome has been burnt to ashes. But even today his colleague, the Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur has not been able to grasp the lesson. The unfortunate pupil is with his control of prices and he has not minded the question of supply.

The people of Faridpur saw through the game and their representatives in the District Board forwarded a resolution suggesting a definite scheme to Government. The motion was carried *nem. con.* and copy forwarded to Government quickly. Much water has flown down the Ganges after that but the situation remains where it was then. The control of prices is causing havoc in the absence of supply.

Where is the all-pervading machinery of supply even yet? Have you taken stock of what is the surplus of food grains and in what districts? What is the shortage of food and in what quantities, in which of the deficit districts and parts thereof? How are you going to marshal your resources?

Is co-ordination of action between District Officers of Bengal effective? Have family members been counted? Is the deficit of each family known? Have ration cards been issued? Are the merchants licensed? Have the mahajans been made responsible for supply on penalty as suggested? Are the Subdivisional Officers held responsible for deaths by starvation? Are the reports of the Subdivisional Officers read? Are they respected? Have they been given time to enquire and make a report? Have the District Magistrates been made responsible in the way suggested? Are the requisitions of the Subdivisional Officers and District Magistrates honoured? Are the Control Officers of Purchase and Supply co-ordinated? Have they been given the task of looking to the requisitions of Subdivisional Officers and District Magistrates? Are there yet a set of officers from the capital of Bengal down to the village chained in a system? The officers must be ready, officers must be willing, officers must be able to work out the system. Have the public bodies from the District Board down to the Union Board been taken into confidence? It was a seven days' work to have an estimate of needs and estimates of surplus and seven days more to provide ration cards? People were and are willing to co-operate. Red-tapism is a danger and has led to disaster.

Had you time to read the scheme forwarded by the District Board of Faridpur in July last? Why then did you not answer the question put by me in the Assembly in the August session? Were not the questions important? Did you reject the scheme or had accepted it was the simple question? The reasons for rejection or any alternate scheme adopted by Government were the further demands in the further questions. You have not replied to them then. Reply to them now. What is the scheme you intend to follow must be clearly explained.

I conceive you have no time to formulate a scheme. Your masters have other mind. Officers and officials are warring. You are warring too. You are warring the people on their ideology. The Muslim League to you was as a red rag to a bull. You spend time in fighting silly Jinnah. You make love and mean to be wise in your dealings with the Congress. You make obeisance to your masters and fight their underlings Impossible! Incongruity is there. Village people die. For you is death by starvation. Food situation is being solved by the Ministers in their Bengal Budget and in the speech of the Hon'ble Chief Minister made thereunder. It cannot be done overnight! Submit. Sing Fazlul Huq Zindabad! You have not done. Death sentence is here; one by slow degrees!

Hon'ble Mr. Bose is warring. But he is sure Calcutta will no more be bombed. Village Hindus, do not worry. Enter his League. Come to Calcutta. য আগত স জীবতি is the slogan now. We in Calcutta shall not die of starvation. مرا هست بط را ز طوفاں چه باک I have enough; a duck has nothing to worry about storm, hailstorm or tornado.

This is the solution of the food problem in Bengal. The budget makes other solutions also.

You villagers shall not cry for water. Tube-well materials are not available. Tap water might fail in Calcutta, whichever was a piece of pipe—we have sunk in Calcutta. Do not suggest, poor boy, that a masonry well or a reinforced concrete well is a good substitute for a tube-well. We shall not give you either. Rivers in Bengal and channels and other water courses—you are dying. Let you continue in your nuisances.

(At this stage the red light was lit.)

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: May I have a few minutes more?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You can have two minutes only.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Thank you, Sir. There no gentleman lives. Come to the metropolis. Let rivers and channels alone. Flood flush —you never talk of. All these were the talks of the last decade—while Fazlul Huq was a rustic. He is now a gentleman—Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq. These talks are obsolete and out of date now. Purchase more of dredgers if you can. Have more of Ministers and more of emoluments, loaves and fishes for members Famine comes and famine goes, crops fail and people die, but we shall go on for ever. The declaration is there: the M.L.A.'s shall live till one year after the war is over!

Quinine, you are not sweet to the taste! You cannot move unbridled amongst our people! If an inexhorable man insists let him read the *Calcutta Gazette*. Quinine is selling at Rs. 25-8 per pound! The bazar does not supply you even for Rs. 300 for a pound. That is a bad say! "I shall inquire into your allegations", the Hon'ble Mr. Barman has assured. That will do, I believe!

Village dispensaries, you are not our child; you have not behaved well, you must be dissolved You cannot increase in number. We gave you Rs. 250 per annum for 20 villages in a lump. Malarial fevers were not off. Kala-azar could not be controlled. What can we do? No worry again! We are going to give you Rural Public Health Units. We have provided 11 lakhs. We provided this money in the current year. We provided the same amount the year before. We have not spent a single cowri. We shall not spend a cowri this year also. Do not worry!

Village sanitation—Rs 4,000—is not a small sum for one lakh of villages! India Government has lost sympathy! We cannot do anything more.

"Grow more jute" and make money! We have given you the quota.
Grow more food campaign we have given up!
Is it not good enough!

Economic development and improvement of rural areas, your name is there in the budget! No provision has been made. It is a sad omission. We shall look to it, poor boy!

For that do not be a rustic: do not talk of Co-operation—Agriculture, Industries. We have reduced the grants. It must be because our budget figure has from Rs. 35 crores in 1942-43 risen to Rs. 44 crores in 1943-44. We have made loans to meet the demands of the noble man! We cannot bear the talks of the rustics!

Poor silly boys from the village ran to me to tell me that there were commitments. Raw Jute Tax and Sales Tax were imposed with clear commitments. They say promise was there definite to utilise the money for (1) Rural Primary Education, (2) Rural Public Health, (3) Rural Water-supply. They suggest further that Land Revenue is an income from cultivators. Tax on jute is again a money drawn from the cultivating people. Poor silly boys, can you tell me when I did keep my promise!

I was not a Baburchi. I did not give you *Dal-bhat*! Poor Suhrawardy made a promise. What do I care for it! He has been removed from his guddy for that! Do you expect I shall keep his promise good! Down with Suhrawardy! Down with his promise! Do not suggest that the poor cultivators have a claim on Government money!

(The House was then adjourned for 15 minutes.)

(After adjournment.)

Kazi ABUL MASUD: Mr. Chairman, Sir,——

Nawabzada Khwaja NASARULLAH: On a point of order, Sir. The Treasury Bench is empty——

Mr. SHAHEDALI: We are taking notes.

Mr. CHAIRMAM (Mr. David Hendry): I have sent information to the Hon'ble Chief Minister who, I hope, will come back in five minutes. In the meantime let us carry on.

Kazi ABUL MASUD: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I do not know whether one is to congratulate the Hon'ble Finance Minister on the Budget as presented by him. After the inauguration of the so-called Provincial Autonomy in the year 1937 bye-elections of the different legislatures and other local bodies throughout India have clearly demonstrated that Muslim League is the only organisation which can deliver goods on behalf of the Muslims of India. In this province the Muslims constitute a great majority. Circumstances have taken such a shape that the Muslim League has no share in the administration of this province. But, Sir, how this ministry is working with an artificial majority inside the legislature is for the House to judge.

Coming, Sir, to the General Administration of the province what we find today is really shocking and one can see how and in what way the Government machinery is moving on. Sir, in his budget speech the Hon'ble the Finance Minister has referred to the expansion of the Directorate of Civil Supplies. But is this big paraphernalia, maintained at the cost of poor people's hard-earned money, functioning properly? Instead of tackling the food problem successfully the situation is going to be worsened day by day: prices of essential commodities are shooting up stage by stage. The Hon'ble the Finance Minister has said: "By July last it had become abundantly clear that the fixation of the minimum price by law was no solution of our problem: the effect was to drive supplies underground or what is properly referred to as black market". Even at such a late period, I

mean in July last, the ministry arising from great slumber finds one morning that this state of affairs is going on. Then what drastic action has been taken against these culprits for their anti-social activities? What are their officers doing? Under their directions the District Officers and the Subdivisional Officers are applying the Defence of India Act and its Rules to suppress public opinion, to stop criticism of the policy of the ministry, to oppress political leaders and to repress social workers. But, Sir, scene does not end here and even some members of the legislature have been detained under these Rules: the Press has been gagged. But what about these hoarders and unscrupulous merchants who are sucking every ounce of the life-blood of our nation? How many prosecutions under the Defence of India Act and its Rules have been started against this privileged class? In many cases they are let off with a mild warning. Why drastic action has not been taken against these worst criminals of the society? The whole atmosphere, Sir, is surcharged with corruption and jobbery.

Then, Sir, coming to the "Grow more food" campaign of this Government I maintain that the ministry lacks extremely in imagination and judgment which are so very essential at this hour of emergency. In this connection the Hon'ble the Finance Minister has referred to distribution of paddy, mustard, lentil and potato seeds. But to whom these seeds are distributed? Generally they are distributed not to the tillers of the soil who actually need them but to some big jotedars who never utilise them for production purposes.

Then comes the question of recommendations of the Floud Commission. Mr. Gurner, Special Officer, appointed to examine these recommendations, has already submitted his report in July, 1940, but no effect has been given to his recommendations up till now. One of the important aspects of these recommendations is consolidation of the holdings. Unless there be a definite scheme to consolidate the fragmentation of the holdings real improvement of these lands cannot be effected. Why this hesitation of the Progressive Coalition Party in this direction? Experiments, particularly in Khas Mahal and permanently-settled estates, should have been started. The Chief Minister is shrewd enough and he just showed a gesture and before the commencement of the budget session released a statement to the Press simply to hoodwink the public. What a colossal hoax! If he really means business, why is he sleeping so long with the new members of his happy and blessed family? Did he proceed a single step to bring about these radical changes? There are thousands and thousands of acres of culturable but not cultivated lands, which Government have neither surveyed nor taken any statistics of. Arrangements should have been made long before to settle these lands with the cultivators. But Government have totally ignored this aspect of the agricultural problem.

Then, Sir, in many parts of this province, unless there be proper arrangement for irrigation, the lands, if cultivated, will not yield any produce. Due to failure of drainage scheme and want of arrangement of artificial irrigation for watering lands, the people dependent on the yield of these lands are in great economic distress. A well-planned scheme should have

been chalked out and much more money should have been allotted under this head. There is no provision either for grants and subventions to schemes of rural reconstruction or for grants-in-aid towards minor drainage schemes. Sir, after the passing of the Bengal Money-lenders Act no sources have been left open to offer credit facilities to the hard-hit agriculturists except advancing short-term crop loans through the agency of the Bengal Provincial Co-operative Bank. In spite of a provision of Rs. 60 lakhs in the budget for this purpose the amount has not been utilised. Is it because the co-operators of this province have started non-co-operation with the Ministers? Then, Sir, due to this attitude, members of the co-operative societies are losing all their confidence in the co-operative movement.

Sir, that this Ministry has not formulated any scheme to alleviate the distress of the rural Bengal will be clearly demonstrated from another fact. There have been savings to the extent of Rs. 1,18,000 owing to postponement of special expenditure on rural reconstruction and savings to the extent of Rs. 1,76,000 owing to the non-utilisation of enlarged grants to district officers for rural reconstruction. These subordinate officers like Ministers are treating the rural and simple people with all callousness and indifference. Not only this. Sir, I have forgotten to add that these officers conveniently forget that they are servants of the Crown and not the servants of the Ministers and with the valuable assistance and co-operation of this type of officers Ministers are pursuing their policy of oppression, suppression and repression to the Muslim Leaguers. Muslim League Chairmen of district boards, local boards and municipalities have been removed one after another. Muslim League workers have been put to undue harassment and under detention.

Sir, I do not like to mention a catalogue of misdeeds of this Ministry, but I do maintain with all the emphasis at my command that the budget with such heavy liabilities to the Central Government has thoroughly neglected the nation-building departments. I strongly hold that though Ministers are sufficient in number, yet they are inefficient to run the administration efficiently.

Maulana Md. MANIRUZZAMAN ISLAMABADI: মাননীয় ডেপুটি স্পীকার মহোদয়: আমাদের শ্রদ্ধেয় অর্থ-সচিব, এই দুর্দ্দিনে, একদিকে যেখানে পৃথিবীময় মহাসমরের বিশ্বগ্রাসী প্রভাব, অন্যদিকে মেদিনীপুর, ২৪-পরগণা প্রভৃতি স্থানে প্রাকৃতিক ভীষণ দুর্য্যোগ, খাদ্য ও নিত্য-ব্যবহারের দ্রব্যাদির দুর্ম্মূল্যতা ও দুষ্প্রাপ্যতা ইত্যাদি বাধাবিপত্তির ভিতর দিয়া যে বাজেট প্রস্তুত করিয়াছেন, তজ্জন্য তাঁহাকে এবং তাঁহার সহযোগী অন্যান্য মন্ত্রীদিগকে সাধুবাদ ও প্রশংসা করিতে হয়।

গত বৎসরের তুলনায় এই বৎসরে অর্থাৎ ১৯৪৩-৪৪ সালে শিক্ষা বিভাগের প্রায় ১ কোটি টাকা অধিক ব্যয়-বরাদ্দ হইয়াছে। এংলো ইণ্ডিয়ানদের শিক্ষার বেলায়ও ৩৫ লক্ষ টাকা বেশী ব্যয়িত হইবে। মেডিকেল ব্যাপারেও ৩১ লক্ষ টাকা বেশী ধরা হইয়াছে। "পাবলিক হেলথে" প্রায় দুই লক্ষ টাকা অধিক খরচ হইবে। অবশ্য কৃষি বিভাগে প্রায় ১৭ লক্ষ টাকা কম খরচ হইবে। ইহা অতীব দুঃখের বিষয়। ভেটারিনারী বিভাগে প্রায় ১ লক্ষ টাকা অধিক খরচ হইবে। "কো-অপারেটিভেও" প্রায় ১ লক্ষের মত ব্যয় বৃদ্ধি পাইয়াছে। "শিল্প বিভাগে" ১

লক্ষের অধিক এ বৎসর ব্যয়িত হইবে। "সিনকোনা" উৎপাদনে দেড় লক্ষ টাকা অধিক ব্যয়িত হইবে। "সিভিল ওয়ার্কে" এক লক্ষ টাকা অধিক ব্যয়িত হইবে। দুর্ভিক্ষ তহবিলে পূর্ব্ব বৎসরের তুলনায় বহু কম টাকা অর্থাৎ ৪০ লক্ষ টাকা কম নির্দ্দিষ্ট হইয়াছে।

আমাদের দেশের যে দুরবস্থা, এ বৎসর যেরূপ দেখিতেছি, তাহাতে অর্দ্ধেকের বেশী লোক না খাইয়া মারা যাইবার আশঙ্কা আছে। এ বৎসর দুর্ভিক্ষ খাতে, কোটি কোটি টাকা ব্যয় করিতে হইবে। এখনই টাকায় ৵২।০ সের চাউল! "মেচ বিভাগে"ও এক লক্ষ টাকা বেশী ধরা হইয়াছে।

যাহা হউক, আমি এখন দুই তিনটি জেলা সম্বন্ধে কিছু আলোচনা করিব। মাননীয় অর্থ-সচিবের বাজেট-বক্তৃতা পাঠে দেখা যায়, ১৬ই অক্টোবর (১৯৪২) মেদিনীপুরে যে প্রবল ঝড় হয়, তাহাতে ৩,৪০০ বর্গ মাইল স্থান প্লাবিত ও বিধ্বস্ত হইয়াছে। ২৫ লক্ষ লোক ন্যূনাধিক ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত হইয়াছে। গভর্ণমেণ্টের অনুমান, শতকরা ৫০ ভাগ গৃহপালিত পশু নষ্ট হইয়াছে। অবশিষ্ট অংশও ন্যূনাধিক ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত হইয়াছে। মড়ক জীবজন্তুর মধ্যে সংক্রামিত হইয়াছে। অনুমান করা গিয়াছে, তত্রত্য লোকেরা, ৬০ লক্ষ টাকার মুখাপেক্ষী হইয়াছে। ৭০ লক্ষ টাকা কৃষি-ঋণের আবশ্যক হইবে। বন্যায় যে সকল রাস্তা, ঘাট ও বাঁধের ক্ষতি হইয়াছে, তাহা মেরামত করিতে ৩০ লক্ষ টাকা লাগিবে। ২৪-পরগণার ক্ষতির পরিমাণ অপেক্ষাকৃত কম।

অর্থ-সচিব মহোদয়ের বক্তৃতায় একটী গুরুতররূপে ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত জেলার উল্লেখ না দেখিয়া আমরা বিস্মিত হইয়াছি। অর্থাৎ চট্টগ্রাম জেলার কথা। চট্টগ্রাম জেলা সর্ব্বাপেক্ষা ঘন বসতি-পূর্ণ দেশ। এই জেলায় যাহা উৎপন্ন হয় স্বাভাবিক অবস্থাতেও তদ্দ্বারা দেশবাসীর ৬ মাসের খোরাক হয় না। অবশিষ্ট ৬ মাসের খোরাক বাহির হইতে অর্থাৎ ব্রহ্ম দেশ হইতে আমদানী করা হইত। চট্টগ্রাম জেলার ৫ লক্ষাধিক লোক ব্রহ্ম দেশে ও জাহাজ ইত্যাদিতে কাজ করিয়া প্রচুর অর্থ উপার্জ্জন করিয়া আনিত। তদ্দ্বারা আমদানী ধান, চাউলের ব্যয় নির্ব্বাহিত হইত। কিন্তু গত বৎসর হইতে যুদ্ধের প্রভাব চট্টগ্রাম পর্য্যন্ত বিস্তৃত হইয়া পড়িয়াছে। ব্রহ্ম দেশ হইতে কম পক্ষে ২ লক্ষ লোক আসিয়া জনসংখ্যা বৃদ্ধি করিয়াছে। ব্রহ্ম দেশের ধান, চাউলের আমদানী একেবারে বন্ধ। জেলার বহু স্থান হইতে সামরিক উদ্দেশ্যে বহু গ্রাম জনশূন্য করিয়া দেওয়া হইয়াছে। তাহারা এখন মাথা লুকাইবার স্থান পাইতেছে না। এ বৎসর অজন্মা হেতু ধানের উৎপত্তিও মোটের উপর অর্দ্ধেক হইয়াছে। ইহার উপর মিলিটারীদের উপদ্রব ও তাহাদের জন্য শস্য-ক্রয় স্বতন্ত্র বিপদ। এখন চট্টগ্রামবাসীর উপায় কি? তাহাদের জীবনধারণের পন্থা কি তাহা নির্ণয় করা মন্ত্রীবর্গের একান্ত আবশ্যক। "ডিনায়েল পলিসি"ও তাহাদের সর্ব্বনাশ করিয়াছে। প্রত্যহ মাথার উপর দিয়া শত্রু ও মিত্র পক্ষের উড়ো জাহাজসকল অহরহ উড়িয়া বেড়াইতেছে। সৈন্যদল দিবারাত্রি চালিত হইতেছে। এই জিলায় খাদ্যশস্য সরবরাহ করা এবং গভর্ণমেণ্টের নির্দ্দিষ্ট মূল্যে বিক্রয় করা একান্ত আবশ্যক।

আমার মনে হয়, ইউরোপ ও আমেরিকার ন্যায় প্রত্যেক বাড়ীর লোকসংখ্যা নিরূপিত করিয়া তাহাদের হাতে কার্ড দিলে, সেই কার্ড দেখাইয়া খাদ্যের পরিমাণ সরকারী দোকান হইতে নির্দ্দিষ্ট মূল্যে পাইতে থাকিবে। বর্ত্তমান সময়ে শহরের স্থানে স্থানে যে সকল কণ্ট্রোল দোকান আছে, সেখান হইতে কোন ভদ্রলোক চাউল, ডাল বা কেরোসিন কিনিতে পারে না। জোর যার, মুলুক তার এই ব্যবস্থাই ঐ সকল দোকানে চলিতেছে।

Mr. W. C. WORDSWORTH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, by a happy tradition the rules for this budget procedure are as free and easy as for certain other

popular forms of wrestling and the control is as light and unoppressive as it is in the rice and sugar markets. Availing myself of this latitude I would spend my few minutes in saying something about a matter to which the budget hardly refers, I mean the state of education and teachers in Bengal and specially, of late, in Calcutta.

I have felt tempted to refer to what Mr. Gupta said about the Civic Guards. Being myself one of the ruffians in that ruffianly service, I feel it right that I should assure Mr. Gupta that there are plenty of vacancies in the Guards and that if he is anxious to improve us, he will be welcome when he offers to bring into us those public and civic virtues that at present he does not find in myself and my colleagues. I can assure him he will be given ample opportunity for doing his four hours duty every night, his three hours every alternate day, his 3 to 4 parades every week and a few extras to keep him busy.

As for the A. R. P. we have heard serious accusations brought against their courage. I trust we shall have ample opportunity to speak about that in the remainder of this debate. It is a strange charge to bring against a public service and I am sure ample evidence to the contrary can be given on the floor of the House.

I now turn to one subject of social service of the greatest importance, a service which has been of late in the very forefront line of defence not only of this province but of the culture of this country. I take my text from something of what Mr. Sen said the other evening. He started to talk about education in Calcutta, and I should like to develop his thought. It is not necessary to blame anyone for the chaos that has come about, or if we started blaming we are all equally blameworthy including the members of this House who have not troubled themselves at all about it, who have not paid any attention to what is going on, who never met to talk about it.

Now the disaster may be studied as a interesting example of the way in which a social calamity spreads if it is not checked at the outset. First of all, there was the disappearance from Calcutta of thousands and tens of thousands of children owing to the panic, and the commonsense, of their parents. This weakened the schools. There was loss of children, loss of fees, insufficient resources to carry on. Teachers had to be dismissed or put on very, small pay. Then there was an uncertainty. The schools did not know what the parents wanted and so they could not frame a decided policy. Then the University did not know what the parents or the schools wanted. It had to find a formula dealing with two uncertainties. And last of all came the Government which had to deal with three uncertainties, the opinion of the University, parental opinion and the opinion of school authorities. Need we be surprised that chaos and disintegration have been the result? It has been a calamity of which everyone could see the beginning, and I am afraid at present we cannot see the end.

I want to say a few words especially about the distress among teachers. They, thousands of them, have lost their posts or lost a large part of their salaries, always small, and it has not been possible to give them anything

except very trivial subsidies. Someone in the House said the other day that the budget failed in that it was not sufficiently nation-building. We are in the middle of a war and nations are trying to survive, trying to save themselves from perishing. Similarly, teachers are concerned at this moment with surviving, with avoiding perishing. To keep their families alive, to keep themselves alive, on shreds of salaries never large, is their one concern, and can we blame them if they are not very interested in any long-term policy of nation-building, if their interest at the present moment is in immediate necessities and very short-term arrangements. I say all this as an expression of sympathy with the men and women who have done heroic work for their pupils at a very unpleasant and difficult time, and this is fine service to their country. They, like most other public services, I think like all our public services, have bravely stuck to their guns and worked through all kinds of disadvantage and anxiety. They were in the front line. School managers too have had to face the same difficulties and summon the same resource and courage. So that men years hence, as they try to repair the damage of these years, may not say that we in this House were too stupid, too indifferent to see what was going on under our eyes, I think it is fitting that some of us here should show that the House has been aware of what is going on.

One last topic, and that is the children without schools. There are schools without children, but there are also children without schools. When a big system of education is disintegrated it takes a long time for it to be re-integrated. Amongst our European children there are hundreds now roaming the streets of Calcutta. There are few European schools left in the city, partly because the Army, not having other accommodation, has taken over their schools. They had to be turned out; many have gone to the hills. There are children who cannot afford to go to the hills or whose condition of health does not allow them to go to the hills. And there are many roaming the streets of Calcutta without any schools also there are thousands and tens of thousands of Indian children. You can meet them everywhere. They say: "We do not know where our schools have gone", and so so. There is no school near about and it takes a long time to find new schools. We may say jestingly this is all very well. Children do not mind holidays. The longer the holiday the better they like it. They are having holidays; but like most people they enjoy holidays as a relief, as a change from work. They have not the capability, they could not have the capability, that we experienced legislators have, of sitting down week after week, month after month doing nothing, (Laughter.) inert in body and blank in mind. They want to be active in body and mind, they want their activities to be directed, and if those activities are not directed, if a large proportion of our children who normally should be at school are not being educated it will be a loss to this province in a few years, because it is very difficult to make good waste of time, waste of opportunities. The mind of children develops in quietness. In all countries today children are suffering because their minds have to develop amid fears and alarms, improvisations and difficulties of every kind. That is common. But because Bengal is situated as it is

in relation to the war, and because Bengal's geography is what it is, we in Bengal and especially in Calcutta have had to suffer special ills as well since we can do nothing about it I think it right that we here should pay a tribute to our teachers, tell them that we are aware of their sufferings; and let us hope that some day, in 2 or 3 years, we shall have the opportunity —not we but those who follow us—to do for teachers with a Budget what today our Budget is only able to hint at. (Cheers.)

Mr. MUKUNDA BEHARY MULLICK: Mr. Chairman, in rising to speak a few words on the budget presented to the House for the ensuing year and on the policy pursued by the present Ministry, it is not my desire to enter into details. It has been said that it is a war budget. Some of the items of expenditure proposed could therefore have been omitted at a time when we are passing through an emergency. Provisions have, however, been made for Dearness Allowances to the Ministerial Staff and others drawing a poor salary in all the offices of Government. It seems to me, however, that the Ministry would have served the House, the officers of Government and the province as a whole much better and more usefully if instead of making such provisions they had withdrawn all their interceptions from at least the supplies of the foodstuff and other essential necessities of life. The innocuous resolution tabled on behalf of Government regarding the food situation of the province does not lead us anywhere. Should I get an opportunity to make a few observations before the House when that subject comes up again for further discussion, I hope, the House will realise the dangerous consequences to which we have all been landed and the hopeless condition at which the innocent people in the rural areas have been placed by all sorts of unwise and unjustifiable steps taken so far.

It has been said that the provincial autonomy as has been functioning in this province on the basis of Government of India Act, 1935, is only a sham and has not given any power to a responsible Minister. I am not quite sure if an observation of this character is at all well merited. For having had an opportunity for a few years to discharge that responsibility I am definite that so long as a Minister is honest and true to his oaths of office and secrecy, there is hardly any difficulty for him. But as soon as he introduces his personal ideas into the affairs of the provincial administration, he is sure to get into troubles.

It has to be remembered that officers of His Majesty's Government are nobody's household servants and they can never be expected to carry out anybody's whims whispered into their ears and not even put in black and white. It is therefore necessary that time should be spent not only to be acquainted with the details of the administration but also to have a fair discussion with such officers as can tender advice based on their experiences so that a proper conclusion can be reached. Every one knows that under the present emergent circumstances through which the country is now passing the affairs of a Government have increased in volumes. These call for a very large amount of time of a Minister being spent in analysing them before he can come to any conclusion of his own. So long as this is done properly and according to the oaths by which he is enjoined to do all

manner of right without fear or favour and ill-will or affection there is hardly any room for such officers being disloyal or for the head of the administration to take a different course of action for the maintenance of law and order as also for carrying on good government in the name and on behalf of His Majesty the King-Emperor and also with due regard to the rights and privileges of the minorities in the province.

If it is said with impunity that a provincial Governor brought from home is of an intriguing character and has got the capacity of setting one against the other for which there is hardly any reason or even evidence, it must be admitted that his disciple, the caste Hindu politician of this unfortunate caste ridden country has excelled him in various ways and to a very large degree. He has been in the field of education and political activities almost from the beginning of the British administration in this country. He has not only taken full advantage of education along with the facilities that administrative authorities have given him but has at the same time taken great care to see that those behind him do never get an opportunity of even asking for a share of any of those facilities to which they may be justly and properly entitled under the administration. He has through his cleverness not only managed to enjoy all the cream but has also succeeded in bringing about differences and divisions amongst others so that they may not get any opportunity even of having a common understanding among themselves. He has so manoeuvred his activities that he has succeeded in making a Muslim Chief Minister create a division in his own community and practically to strike at the root of all attempts towards advancements that the masses of the Muslims have made. Along with this, he has very well succeeded in keeping the unfortunate Scheduled Castes separated from one another so that they can never unite even to have a common understanding with respect to public matters. I am not quite sure if the earliest history of British rule in this country shows anything of that nature from which a policy of "Divide and Rule" can at all be deduced. If it has appeared in the administration at any time, it seems to me that it has been introduced by the caste Hindu politician. Time has however come or is fast approaching when a policy of that character is bound to meet with disastrous consequences. It only shows that we cannot, through our own ignorance of the affairs of the world, look beyond our noses; but we must remember that we are all responsible to our electorates and we shall also be called upon to give an account of our activities in this House. It will not do for us to say that we have asked a Minister to explain his activities to this House, for we are also equally responsible, if not to the House but to our electorates and to the people outside.

It cannot be said that the present Ministry have got no policy. They have certainly got one of their own. It is just to make promises and propaganda. They have utilised their tours in advertising themselves—by hoisting of Krishak Proja or Forward Blockist or Hindu Sabha flags, or in abusing those who hold views against theirs or in shouting loud of the "Ganga-Jamuna Sangam". When in the countryside any difficulty is placed before them, they are quick in making promise for its redress, even

when they feel that it is not possible to fulfil the same. They have neither the courage to openly refuse such request nor have any courtesy to explain the position. Press is always handy and ready to advertise such propaganda and promises. If Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar were alive today, I feel confident that he would have been compelled to rewrite his First lesson প্রথম ভাগ and to say "সদা, মিথ্যা কথা কহিবে কদাচ সত্য কথা কহিবে না।"

Mr. SYED BADRUDDUJA: On a point of order, Sir. Is Mr. Mullick discussing the political situation in the country or discussing the budget?

Mr. CHAIRMAN (Mr. David Hendry): It is no point of order.

Mr. MUKUNDA BEHARY MULLICK: It is a point of disorder.

Again, the Ministry have practically given a go-bye to the decision taken in June 1939 for giving a certain proportion of all the appointments under Government to qualified candidates of all the communities living in this country. In the name of false efficiency, however, they have not hesitated to introduce personal considerations in these appointments as are evident in almost all the departments.

We had an information the other day that a nephew and a son found direct entrances into the Registration Department I understood that one of them at least did not possess the minimum educational qualification. I only hope that my information is incorrect. If enquiries be made, we may be favoured with information of this kind where personal considerations have weighed to make the final choice on an efficient basis of this sort in other departments of the Government as well—Sales Tax, General Services, Judicial, Medical, Clerical, Civil Defence and A. R. P. In the last mentioned departments also it is said that candidates reading up to classes seven or eight of Matriculation Standard with special qualification of membership of certain organisations have been chosen in preference to Scheduled Caste Matriculates. I only wish again that my information is not correct.

It is a great pity that affairs of this unfortunate province should have been directed in the way in which they are being directed for the last 14 months. All these activities pointedly show that the expression of hopelessness given vent to by one of the champions of the Scheduled Castes while taking part in the general discussion on the budget of the province of Bengal 20 years back still holds correct; for, he said that from the highest to the lowest every one is full of sympathy with the Depressed Classes or Scheduled Castes but when time comes to translate it into action all sympathy evaporates.

We all know that the term "Hindu" does not denote any homogeneous race. The Legislature of the province has hardly got anything to do with the personal affairs regarding religion of any human being belonging to any community whatsoever. We are here to discharge our responsibilities to our constituencies in regard to the activities of the Government so far as they function under the Statute. We are no beggars and we desire it to be clearly understood that we must have our proper share definitely given to us in all the activities of the administration. We do not beg of anybody

nor have we any desire to do so. But we emphatically protest against the sinister attempt made by some to create differences amongst us with a pernicious motive. They must realise that matters will not end here and when that day comes, they will also realise the consequences of such activities.

We are not very much concerned with secondary or higher education. We are concerned with primary education so that the illiterate masses in the interior of the province can have the consciousness that they are also human beings and that they have a right to live. It is no use taking undue advantage of their helpless position. That position only calls for a sympathetic consideration: but instead they are being utilised only for the aggrandisement of a handful of privileged people. I believe that with a little education, they will be able to understand their own individual budget. They will be able to utilise their spare time and their vacant lands attached to their homesteads for the purpose of growing more food. They will be able with a little education to keep better health so that they do not fall victims to the epidemics when they spread in a horrible shape in this unfortunate province. Instead of doing anything of the kind a sum of Rs. 8,00,000 is being provided only to develop primary education. Nobody knows what it means. The use, however, that the few school boards set up in the province have been making of these sums spent up till now is clear to every one. It has only introduced communal and personal differences in the interior. The Government of Bengal have no doubt got special officers and have been spending special money and special time for primary education, but we should have been happy if all the special things have been withdrawn and the old system of having schools in the villages for the purpose of giving simple lessons on reading and writing and on Arithmetic and health, were re-introduced, perhaps they would have done better. We are again not concerned with the establishment of any Appointment Board of any Unviersity which has been done only to remove the unemployment problem of those attached to such boards and of no one else.

We know how the activities of the "Grow More Food Campaign" have been working in the province for the last few months. It is lucky as the Hon'ble Minister said that it would not be repeated in the next year's budget. I will not dilate upon the activities which I myself have noticed. I met an honourable member of this House supporting the so-called National Ministry at Darjeeling in October last and I understood from him that this was his second visit to Darjeeling after a number of years. He didn't disclose to me the purpose of his visit, but I came to learn from some of the officers of Government whom I casually met on the streets of Darjeeling that he was there to purchase potato seeds on behalf of Government and that he was backed by a personal chit given by an Hon'ble Minister of the National Ministry in his mission. I will have a few more observations to make if I get a few minutes when the other subject regarding the food situation in Bengal comes to be further discussed.

The manifestation of Hindu-Muslim unity we have noticed in the course of the last year resulting from the expenditure of the lakh of rupees provided for in the last year's budget ought to be a lesson to all of us and we only

hope and trust that such unity attempts will not be repeated by the present Ministry. It is a matter of common knowledge that the communal propensities leading to all sorts of disturbances in this province have been the result of speeches and activities on the one side of one of the Muslim leaders and on the other of a Hindu Sabha leader.

I do not propose to take any more time of the House at this stage and I resume my seat by only giving an expression to a feeling of agony that woe unto a province whose affairs are being managed by a body of gentlemen who do not know, nor desire to know, what the facts are and who have no regard, nor do they desire to have any regard, for their own selves as also for the people placed under their charge for the time. (Applause from the European, Muslim League and Bengal Legislature Scheduled Caste Parties.)

Babu ASHUTOSH LAHIRI: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are now passing through a most critical period of our history, and Bengal being now in the very forefront of the firing line, we have been confronted with problems and difficulties which would have taxed to its utmost the power of initiative and resourcefulness of any Ministry that might have been in power today. To add to this, natural calamities unprecedented in the history of the province have immensely complicated the extraordinary situation in which the Ministry finds itself. It is no wonder, therefore, that the budget proposals presented before the House by the Hon'ble the Chief Minister have not proved to be as satisfactory as one would have wished. There are many important problems which await effective handling by the Ministers, but the paramount need of the hour has relegated them to the background. This is no doubt disconcerting. Sir, we cannot ignore the stern realities of the present situation. It will be, therefore, unfair to blame the present Ministry for its various shortcomings.

Sir, at the outset I want to invite the attention of the House to an unfortunate reference in the speech of the Hon'ble the Finance Minister about the manner in which the campaign of sabotage and hooliganism has been suppressed. He has said that "Government servants met the situation with courage and determination and that the police in particular rose nobly to the occasion" But there is not a word of sympathy for the thousands of innocent sufferers who have lost their properties and many of whom lost their lives. The police acted nobly indeed! One has only to take a round in the village areas of Midnapore district and those of the Balurghat subdivision in the district of Dinajpur, only to realise what was the true picture. Indeed, Sir, the police and the executive officials acted with such a callous disregard of the elementary principles of fairness as we have hardly witnessed during the long period of British administration in this country. Sir, an appreciation of the conduct of these executive officials by the Hon'ble the Chief Minister therefore is only adding insult to the injury. A popular Minister must reflect popular opinion and in this particular matter I regret to have to say that the Hon'ble the Chief Minister has failed us.

Coming now, Sir, to the actual budget proposals I shall, first of all, refer to the Home Guard organisation. In the current year Rs. 2,50,000

has been spent on this organisation and in the coming year provision has been made for Rs. 17,50,000. Now, Sir, we have a right to know on what principles the Home Guards are being organised. The original scheme of the Ministry regarding the Home Guard organisation had, as we all know, to be abandoned as it did not meet with the approval of the real masters of the province. What variations have been made in the original scheme in order to make it acceptable to them? Is it being organised as an essential limb of the police machinery? To what extent non-official opinion is being allowed to mould this new organisation? Are union committees with non-officials being set up in every union? Last year the Progressive Coalition Party discussed this question and laid down certain definite principles on which the Home Guard should be organised. The most important part of their demand was the establishment of district committees with non-official majority in every district. How far has this resolution of the party been accepted? I hope the Hon'ble the Home Minister will throw adequate light on the question. Sir, we wanted the Home Guard to be an organisation of the people. If that is not possible and if, on the other hand, it is going to be a part and parcel of the police organisation, I feel very strongly that that scheme should not be proceeded with and no further public money should be wasted on this organisation.

It is unfortunate, Sir, that in the current year the expenditure on the nation-building departments has been curtailed to a certain extent. Expenditure on education has been reduced to the extent of Rs. 1 lakh; that on Public Health to the extent of Rs. 10 lakhs; that on Industries to the extent of Rs. 1,20,000; that on Medical, to a little less than one lakh of rupees, and on Public Works, to more than Rs. 55 lakhs. Sir, non-utilisation of a very considerable amount of grants under Public Health and Public Works is simply amazing and I hope the Ministers concerned will explain how it could happen. Sir, an additional grant of Rs. 7½ lakhs was made under Public Health for rural water-supply in this year's budget, out of which only Rs. 50,000 has been spent and the balance of Rs. 7 lakhs remains unspent. I do not know why rural water-supply has been treated so shabbily by the department. What is the excuse for not utilising the major part of the grant? We have been told that owing to war conditions tube-well materials were not available. Sir, why was not this amount utilised in sinking public wells? You could have sunk at least 1,000 public wells with this money and you could have helped a great deal to solve the problem of water-supply in the ruarl areas. Sir, the question of water-supply has been a very acute problem in this province for the last 30 years owing to the drying up of tanks and wells in hot season. It affects also rural sanitation, and I feel, Sir, that the department has shown almost criminal negligence and a lamentable lack of capacity to adapt itself to new conditions.

Again, Sir, under Public Works a very considerable amount of money has remained unspent. It has been stated that owing to non-availability of materials the development of public roads has been hampered. Out of this amount Rs. 18½ lakhs represent the grant for the construction of roads. The poor condition of public roads in this province is well known. Of all

the provinces Bengal is most backward in this respect and the problem of road development is of vital importance to this province. Yet we find large sums of money unutilised on the plea of non-availability of materials. Sir, from our past experience of the working of this department, particularly in respect of road construction, we will be justified in not accepting this official plea as the whole truth. This is again an instance of official incompetence and lack of initiative. Sir, I find that out of the total sum of Rs. 2,86,000 as discretionary grants to District Officers for rural reconstruction Rs. 1,76,000 remains unutilised. That gives an indication of the earnestness of the District Officers in the matter of rural reconstruction! Possibly, the District Officers are now so engaged in suppressing political movements that they have no time to spare for such insignificant task as rural reconstruction. Sir, this callousness of the District Officers in respect of nation-building activities has been well known. Nothing can be more illustrative of this than this failure to spend even such paltry amount.

Sir, a sum of Rs. 18 lakhs has been spent for "Grow-More-Food Campaign" in the current year, but most of this money have been spent on distribution of seeds—such as sugarcane cuttings, paddy seeds, mustard seeds, gram, potato seeds and seeds of English vegetables. While, Sir, I realise the vital importance of encouraging the sowing of food crops, it would be shortsightedness to ignore to promote the cultivation of a new money crop such as cotton in this province. Jute has lost its international market and we are told that a substitute for jute has already been found in the United States of America. Sir, foresight demands that every effort should be made by the Agriculture Department for an extensive cultivation of cotton in this province in addition to the present "Grow-More-Food Campaign." In North and West Bengal cotton cultivation can be easily taken up and, as a matter of fact, cotton had been one of the staple crops in these areas in the past.

Sir, in the matter of primary education a sum of Rs. 8 lakhs in excess of the revised estimate has been provided for in the budget of which Rs. 5 lakhs is intended for setting up more district primary school boards. Sir, we, Hindus, have a serious objection to any further expansion of areas to be brought under the Primary Education Act until that Act is suitably amended so as to ensure an equitable working of the primary education machinery. There have been serious complaints with regard to the selection of sites for schools, selection of text-books and appointment of teachers in the districts where Primary Education Act has been in operation. We know of many cases where old and well-established primary schools have been asked to shift to new and unsuitable localities evidently not for the best interest of primary education in those areas, and for their failure to do so their financial grants had been discontinued, causing great hardships to the teachers. So I strongly feel that steps should be taken as early as possible to amend that Act and to place the entire system of primary education on a new and improved foundation.

Sir, coming now to the Industries Department, the question of cinchona plantations has assumed vital importance for the welfare of the province since the loss of supply of quinine from the Dutch East Indies. Quinine

has now become a rarity in Bengal though it is a matter of life and death to this malaria-stricken province. Why does not the Industries Department undertake an extensive plantation of cinchona in suitable areas in this province? Sir, there is ample scope for the development of this industry and with proper initiative and financial backing there is no reason why Bengal should not be able to produce the whole of her own requirements.

Sir, before I conclude I cannot but express my great disappointment at the failure of the Ministry to utilise the sum of one lakh of rupees for promotion of communal harmony. Only Rs. 25,000 has been provided in the budget estimate for the coming year for this purpose. It appears that the Ministry has not succeeded in evolving a proper scheme for undertaking this great task. I do not know if it is due to lack of will or lack of time. In any case it is sad to reflect how a great opportunity has been missed.

Maulana MD. ABDUL AZIZ: Deputy Speaker, Sir, অদ্য বাজেট আলোচনায় যোগ দিয়া বর্ত্তমান গভর্ণমেণ্ট পাটচাষ নিয়ন্ত্রণদ্বারা বাংলার গরীব চাষীদের পাটের উপযুক্ত মূল্য দিতে অসমর্থ হইয়া যে বাধ তার পরিচয় দিয়াছেন সে সম্বন্ধে আমি কিছু বলিব।

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Sir, we demand that the Ministers be present during the general discussion of the budget. All the members of the Treasury Benches cannot be absent.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: My difficulty is that I cannot force the Ministers to be here. The Chief Minister and other Ministers have asked my permission to be absent and have informed me that the Hon'ble Mr. Barman will take note on their behalf.

Maulana Md. ABDUL AZIZ: আমরা এসেম্বলিতে আসিয়াই পাটের নিম্নদর বাঁধিবার জন্য আবেদন জানাইলে পর গভর্ণমেণ্ট পক্ষ হইতে বলা হয় যে পাটচাষ নিয়ন্ত্রণ না করিয়া পাটের নিম্নদর বাঁধা অসম্ভব। পাটচাষ নিয়ন্ত্রণ করিলে পাটের দর আপনা হইতেই বিশেষরূপে বাড়িয়া যাইবে এবং তাহাতে বঙ্গের দরিদ্র কৃষকগণ টাকা পয়সা পাইয়া সুখে সচ্ছন্দে দিন যাপন করিবে। নূতন মেম্বর হিসাবে তখন কথাগুলি বিশ্বাস করিয়া লইয়াছিলাম। এবং তৎপরে ১৯৪০ সালে যখন পাটচাষ নিয়ন্ত্রণ আইন হইয়া যায় তখন ভাবিয়াছিলাম এতদিনে বুঝি গরীব কৃষককুলের দুঃখ শেষ হইতে চলিল। কিন্তু হায়। দরিদ্র চাষী বেচারারা যে দুঃখে সেই দুঃখেই রহিয়া গেল। ১৯৪১ সনে ১৯৪০ সনের পরিমিত পাটের জমির ২।৩ অংশ জমিতে পাট করিবার আদেশ হইলে মনে করিয়াছিলাম এবার যখন পাটের পরিমাণ কম হইবে তখন দর নিশ্চয়ই বেশী হইবে। কিন্তু কোথায়? পাটের দর বাড়িতে না হইয়া পরে হইয়াছিল বটে কিন্তু সে দর গরীব কৃষকের জন্য নহে। পশ্চিমা মাড়োয়ারী অথবা তদনুরূপ দেশীয় মার্চেণ্টদের জন্য ঐ দর হইয়াছিল। পর বৎসর অর্থাৎ ১৯৪২ সনে শুনিলাম যে পরিমিত জমির অর্দ্ধাংশে পাট বুনান করিতে হইবে। সেই কথা শুনিয়া ভাবিয়াছিলাম যে এবার পাট হইবামাত্র বেশী দর পাওয়া যাইবে, কিন্তু তাও হইল না। মফঃস্বলের বার আনা পাট ৩।৪৲ টাকা দরে বিক্রী হইয়াছে, বাকী ৶ তিন আনা ৶১০ সাড়ে তিন আনা ৫৲ টাকা হইতে ১০৲ টাকা দরে এবং ৫১০ আধ আনা পরিমাণ পাট ১০৲ টাকার বেশী দরে বিক্রী হইয়াছে। উদাহরণস্বরূপ আমার নিজের কুমরাদী গ্রামের কথা বলা যাইতে পারে যেখানে অনুমান ৫০০ কৃষকের বাস। আমার যতদূর জানা আছে এই ৫০০ গৃহস্থের মধ্যে বিশ জনের অধিক চাষী হয়ত উপযুক্ত মূল্যে

পাট বিক্রয় করিতে পারে নাই। গভর্ণমেণ্ট হইতে পাট ধরিয়া রাখিবার জন্য চীৎকার করা হইয়াছিল কিন্তু গরীব চাষীরা কি খাইয়া পাট ধরিয়া রাখিবে তাহার কোন উপায় করা হয় নাই। একবার গভর্ণমেণ্ট জানাইয়াছিলেন যে তাঁহারা কিছু টাকা ধার দিয়া চাষীকে সাহায্য করিবেন এবং সেই সাহায্যের ফলে চাষীরা পাট ধরিয়া রাখিবে। দুঃখের বিষয় এই ঘোষণা এমন সময় করা হইয়াছিল যখন গৃহস্থের ঘর হইতে পাট রওয়ানা হইয়া মাড়োয়ারীদের গুদামে উপস্থিত। পরে যখন জানিতে পারিলাম যে গভর্ণমেণ্টের সাহায্যের পরিমাণও মাত্র ১৫৲ টাকার বেশী কোন কৃষককে দেওয়া হইবে না তখন ইহা সুস্পষ্ট হইয়া উঠিল যে বর্ত্তমান গভর্ণমেণ্ট কৃষক-প্রজাদের ব্যাপারে এতই বেখবর যে কোন সময় পাট বিক্রী সুরু হয় এবং কখন কখন প্রজারা পেটের দায়ে মাটির দরে পাট বিক্রী করে, অধিকন্তু কত টাকা দিলে তাহারা পাট ধরিয়া রাখিতে পারে এ সম্বন্ধে তাঁদের কোন ধারণাই নাই। এই মায়ামমতাহীন গভর্ণমেণ্টের রাজ্যে কবে যে দরিদ্র প্রজাদের সুখ হইবে তাহা এক আল্লাহ্ তায়ালাই জানেন। এবার এক তৃতীয়াংশ জমিতে পাট করিতে হইবে বলিয়া খবরের কাগজে দেখিয়াছিলাম কিন্তু কোন প্ররোচনায় প্ররোচিত হইয়া জানি না গভর্ণমেণ্ট এবারও অর্দ্ধেক পরিমাণ জমিতে পাটের চাষ করিবার আদেশ দিয়াছেন। গভর্ণমেণ্ট হয়ত বলিবেন যে আগামীতে এই পরিমাণ পাটের চাহিদা হইবে। তাহা হইলে আমি বলিব যদি গভর্ণমেণ্ট পাটের চাহিদা সঠিক জানিতে পারেন তবে নিম্নদর বাঁধিয়া দিতে বাধা কোথায়? কেন গভর্ণমেণ্ট সর্ব্ব নিম্নদর ১৫৲ টাকা বাঁধিয়া দিতেছেন না? বাংলার গরীব কৃষকেরা তাদের কঠোর পরিশ্রমে অর্জ্জিত এই পাট প্রতিমণ ১৫৲ টাকা হইতে ৩০।৪০৲ টাকা দরে বিক্রয় করিতে না পারিলে এই দুর্দ্দিনে তাহাদের অস্তিত্ব লোপ হইবার কথা। এবার কোন কোন ক্ষেত্রে দেখা গিয়াছে যে দুই মণ পাটের মূল্য দিয়াও এক মণ চাউল ক্রয় করা যায় নাই। তখন গরীব পাট-চাষীরা আমাদের কাছে যাইয়া এই বলিয়া কাঁদিবেন যে আপনারা আইন সভার মেম্বর, নিম্নদর বাঁধিয়া আমাদিগকে এই মাটীর দরে পাট বিক্রয় হইতে রক্ষা করুন। কিন্তু কোথায়? বিনা আইনে নিম্নদর না বাঁধিয়া কে কেমন করিয়া রক্ষা করিতে পারেন? তাই গভর্ণমেণ্টকে বিশেষ অনুরোধ করিয়া জানাইতেছি যে তাহারা অতি সত্বর এই গরীব চাষীদিগকে বাঁচাইবার জন্য পাটের নিম্নদর বাঁধিয়া দিন।

এই প্রসঙ্গে আমি আরও বলিতে চাই যে গত দুই বৎসরের পাটের লাভে মাড়োয়ারী প্রভৃতি ব্যবসায়ীগণ বিশেষ লাভবান হইয়াছেন। একথাও বাজারে গুজব যে মাড়োয়ারীদের খাতিরেই নাকি পাটের নিম্নদর বাঁধা হইতেছে না। হয় গভর্ণমেণ্ট পাটের নিম্নদর বাঁধুন, না হয় নিজেরা উপযুক্ত মূল্য দিয়া পাট খরিদ করিয়া রাখিবার ব্যবস্থা করুন। মোটের উপর কৃষকদের কল্যাণের জন্য তাঁহারা একপা অগ্রসর হউন এই আমরা দেখিতে চাই।

বর্ত্তমানে বাংলা দেশে এই চাষী ভায়েরা না খেয়ে মরিবার মত হইয়াছে। এই জন্য সে সম্বন্ধে কিছু বলিতে চাই। এখানে আমরা দেখিতেছি যে বর্ত্তমান গভর্ণমেণ্টের এ সম্বন্ধে কোন সদিচ্ছা নাই। যদি সদিচ্ছা থাকিত তাহা হইলে তাঁরা এমন কোন ব্যবস্থা করিতে প্রস্তুত হইতেন যাহাতে বাংলার ঘরে ঘরে খাদ্যের ব্যবস্থা হইত। এবার এমন অবস্থা সুরু হইয়া গিয়াছে যে মফস্বলে আর ২।১ মাস এরকম চলিলে কি হইবে সে বিষয়ে মন্ত্রীমণ্ডলী চিন্তা করেন না। তাই বলিতে চাই যে আর ২।১ মাস পরে বাংলার মধ্যে একটা বিপ্লব আসিবে—এবং সেটা সর্ব্বসাধারণের বিপ্লব। সেটা থামাইবার ক্ষমতা গভর্ণমেণ্টের থাকিবে না। কাজেই এখানে বলিতেছি যে এরকম অবস্থা যাহাতে না হয় তাহাই করুন, না হ'লে তাঁদের মন্ত্রিত্ব এবং এই গভর্ণমেণ্ট বলিতে কিছুই থাকিবে না। তাঁদের সকলকে কলিকাতায় বসবাস করিয়া বাঁচিয়া থাকিলে চলিবে না,

মফস্বলের লোকদেরও বাঁচিয়া থাকা দরকার হইবে। এই কারণে খাদ্যের অভাবে, বিশেষ করিয়া কেরোসিনের অভাবে বাংলার কৃষককুলের যে দুর্গতি হইয়া গিয়াছে, তাহা বিশেষ চিন্তা করিয়া বিহিত বিধান করা গভর্ণমেণ্টের একান্ত কর্ত্তব্য।

Mr. P. BANERJI: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have heard the statement made by the Hon'ble the Chief Minister—I mean the budget statement for 1943-44. The statement is very short, but it is not at all sweet showing as it does a deficit budget. The budget is not only a deficit budget this year, but year after year it is becoming so. In 1937 when this Government took office it started with a clean slate—I mean without indebtedness. Now after five years we notice that the indebtedness has been considerably increased and the Hon'ble the Finance Minister has stated in his speech that on the 31st March, 1944, the indebtedness will go up to Rs. 4 crores 75 lakhs, i.e., to the tune of Rs. 5 crores. We do not know what the actuals will be. This, in short, is the picture of the budget.

Now, speakers after speakers have spoken and suggested how Government should frame the budget. Mr. Gladding of the European Party who was the Finance Secretary a few years ago and at whose instance duty on electricity was first imposed, while speaking yesterday on the floor of this House, said that there should be no taxation on electricity. At the same time he suggested that there should be taxation, if necessary, on luxuries. There should be a differential sales tax imposed on selected luxuries. We have no quarrel with him, but I would like to say this, that he has in his speech justified the huge expenditure for the establishment of the Directorate of Civil Supply as well as the expenditure on the "Grow More Food" campaign. Many honourable members have pointed out how the two schemes, "Grow More Food" campaign and "the establishment of the Directorate of Civil Supply" have failed in its object. The Directorate of Civil Supply has so far been a misnomer. You are well aware that not only in towns but also in the countryside there have practically been no supplies. Government have adopted a policy of drift. They do not know their own mind. Now they impose one kind of restriction and immediately after they withdraw that restriction. They have got a very curious idea in their mind if they have got any about food-supply.

As regards the "Grow More Food" campaign we find advertisements in the newspapers. The idea of the Government is to direct the cultivators to grow more food. But it is not possible, as Mr. Hendry said in another debate, to solve the problem in this way. What are the Government doing to mitigate the miseries of the people? People in the countryside are suffering from various kinds of hardships and miseries. Within the short time at my disposal it is not possible to give a detailed picture of the countryside, but I shall try to give a brief picture. I shall read only a portion of a letter just now received by me. It runs thus: On Saturday last a cultivator came to sell his rice at Daulatpur *hât* and sold it at the rate of five annas per seer. You are all aware that in Calcutta the prevailing rate of rice is eight annas. Now the man was arrested and sent to Khulna. There he was released on bail. Now the result has been that from Saturday last nobody came to the market to sell rice. You can well imagine the condition

of the people. No rice was available. Consequent on the arrest of the cultivator an altercation started with the result that the *hât* was looted on Saturday last. Another *hât* was looted in my own district. There the Government officials were helping their purchasing agents. Whenever these agents went into the interior, people could not get food. Even the owners of paddy do not bring their paddy into the market on account of these agents, because the Government agents are purchasing and the Government servants are helping them. Only last week in Jalma *hât* one Mr. Gomes, Deputy Magistrate, went there. He wanted rice at Rs. 8 per maund, but the cultivator could not part with it at that rate. While Government were purchasing paddy at Rs. 6-8 per maund, they were demanding rice at Rs. 8 from the cultivator. The result was, there was an altercation and on the next *hât* day nobody came to sell rice.

I have given the actual state of affairs prevailing in the countryside today. Owing to the presence of these Government agents the poor people are going without food. I don't know what will be the result of this purchasing policy of Government. This is the harvesting season and if now this is the tale of the pitiable condition prevailing in the countryside, nobody knows what will be the condition after two or three months when there will be absolute dearth of crops—I mean paddy, rice, other foodstuffs, etc.

Now, Sir, famine is already there in some of the districts of Bengal. The Government, the bureaucratic Government, will not even admit it, in spite of the present distress prevailing in the province.

So far as the present budget is concerned, it will be seen that provision has been made for huge expenditure on different items. I notice that while all important items or heads have been starved, enormous sums of money are going to be spent on items which are not necessary. Police and such other departments are getting huge amounts of money at the cost of nation-building departments which are literally being starved This can be expected of a bureaucratic Government, but not of a Government who call themselves popular and who claim themselves responsible to and representative of the people of the province. The only conclusion I can draw is that Government may say, "We are not in a position to do this or that."

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Your time is over.

Mr. P. BANERJI: May I have a few minutes more?

Dr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please finish your speech as quickly as possible. You can have two minutes more.

Mr. P. BANERJI: Now, Sir, if this state of affairs continues, if there is undue interference from the Governor, and if Government are unable to help the people in any way, they should, as suggested by Mr. Gupta this evening, join hands with us. If they have courage let them do so. What is the good of continuing in office when the Ministers feel that they are so helpless? They should, I think, resign their office and let the administration be run under section 93 of the Government of India Act.

Sir, I shall say one or two words about what Mr. Wordsworth said regarding Mr. Gupta's remarks. Mr. Wordsworth seems to have been much perturbed on account of the statement made by Mr. Gupta regarding Civic Guards. When Mr. Gupta made that remark he did not have Mr. Wordsworth or other officers of his type in his mind. He meant only the rank and file. As regards the rank and file Mr. Gupta must have in his possession materials which would justify the statement he had made. These men have had no training whatsoever. I would suggest to Mr. Wordsworth that when the cut motions come up for discussion, it would be possible to prove if Mr. Gupta was right and Mr. Wordsworth wrong or *vice versa*.

I would now refer to the speech of Mr. Mullick. It was ridiculous on the part of Mr. Mullick to suggest that His Majesty's officers were nobody's servants. Mr. Mullick ought to be ashamed of having made such a statement. Officers of His Majesty's Government are everybody's servants. They are public servants.

Mr. MUKUNDA BEHARY MULLICK: On a point of personal explanation, Sir. I never used that expression. What I said was that "officers of His Majesty's Government were nobody's household servants".

Mr. P. BANERJI: If I remember aright, he said that they were nobody's servants in another part of his speech. Now he says that they were nobody's "household servants". It is all the same. If he had used the expression "household servants," all I can say is that that question does not arise. The question of "household servants" does not come in here. The officers of Government and the Ministers are all public servants like the permanent officials.

It has been suggested by Mr. Mullick that there is no difficulty for a Minister to carry on under the existing constitution and that much depends on the honesty of the individual Minister. He has also hinted that he is perhaps the only honest man in the world. We know the history of the party which was in power along with Mr. Mullick and we know the history of the party which is now in power. We are not sitting here with our eyes shut. We are watching the fun. We are not interested in either. It is surprising to find Mr. Mullick complaining of nepotism on the part of Ministers one of whom has appointed his nephew and his son to certain posts. We also know, as a matter of fact, that Mr. Mullick himself, when he was a Minister, was responsible for the appointment of as many as 20 or more relations of his in some service or other under Government.

Mr. SYED BADRUDDUJA: Human memory is very short.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Your time is over, Mr. Banerji, and I cannot allow you more time.

Mr. RASIK LAL BISWAS: সভাপতি মহাশয়! অনেক বক্তৃতা হয়ে গিয়েছে, আর বক্তৃতার বোধ হয় কোন ফল হবে না। তাহ'লেও আমার বক্তব্য বিষয় হচ্ছে Scheduled Casteএর অবস্থা বর্ত্তমান গভর্ণমেণ্টের অধীনে কি রকমভাবে চল্‌ছে। মিঃ

মুকুন্দ বিহারী মল্লিক Scheduled Casteএর অবস্থা সম্বন্ধে যে কথা বোলে গেছেন আমারও সেই কথা বল্‌বার ছিল এবং যে রকম পরিষ্কারভাবে তিনি বোলে গেছেন সেজন্য তাঁকে ধন্যবাদ দিচ্ছি।

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: কেন, তাঁর অবস্থা কি ফেরেনি?

Mr. RASIK LAL BISWAS: এই বাজেটের বিষয় আলোচনা ক'রতে গেলে আমরা দেখ্‌তে পাই যে সমস্ত গভর্ণমেণ্টের কার্য্যাবলী বিচার করবার সুযোগ আসে।

এখন বিভিন্ন ডিপার্টমেণ্টে যে ব্যয় বরাদ্দ করা হয়েছে তার দিকে নজর কর্‌লে এই গভর্ণমেণ্ট যে কি ভাবে চল্‌বে তার একটা আভাস পাওয়া যায়। এখানে আমি রেভিনিউএর বিষয়ে কিছু ধর্‌তে চাই না। কেননা একটা বাজেট এই দুর্দ্দিনে ফ্রেম কর্‌তে গেলে অনেক দিক থেকে অনেক ছাট কাট কোরে ফ্রেম করা দরকার। তাতে সকলেরই যে সব বিষয়ে সুবিধা হবে তা হয় না। কাজেই taxation প্রভৃতি বিষয়ে কোন কোন সম্প্রদায়ের অসুবিধা হ'তে পারে কিন্তু এই দুর্দ্দিনে গভর্ণমেণ্ট পক্ষ যে একটা বাজেট খাড়া কোরে দেশের সাম্‌নে উপস্থিত কোরেছেন তাতে গভর্ণমেণ্টকে ধন্যবাদ দিচ্ছি। কারণ এই দুর্দ্দিনে যেখানে লোক খেতে পাচ্ছে না এবং আর দিন কতক পরে খেতে পাবে না, যেখানে সাধারণ লোকের অবস্থা চরমে পেঁাছেচে সেই দুর্দ্দিনে গভর্ণমেণ্ট চালাবার পক্ষে সব দিক থেকে অর্থসংগ্রহ কোরে এটা খাড়া কোরে তোলায় অনেক defect আছে সত্য কিন্তু ঐ সব বিষয় বিবেচনা কোরে দেখ্‌লে তাঁদের দোষ দিবার কিছুই থাকে না। যা হৌক এখন কয়েকটা ডিপার্টমেণ্ট সম্বন্ধে গুটিকতক কথা বল্‌তে চাই এবং পরে যদি সুযোগ পাই সেই সমস্ত ডিপার্টমেণ্টের আলোচনার সময় কিছু বল্‌ব।

প্রথম এগ্রিকাল্‌চার ডিপার্টমেণ্ট সম্বন্ধে। সেখানে অনেক টাকা ধরা হয়েছে, কিন্তু এগ্রি-কাল্‌চার ডিপার্টমেণ্টে এগ্রিকাল্‌চার further করার বিষয় ছাড়া আর সব কাজ সেখানে হচ্চে। জমির fertility কি কোরে বাড়ে, কি কোরে ফসল বেশী পাওয়া যায়, নূতন জিনিসের চাষ আবাদের চেষ্টা এ সব বিশেষ দেখি না। যে পাট বাংলার সম্পদ তার জন্য লক্ষ লক্ষ টাকা বরাদ্দ করা হয়েছে বটে কিন্তু সেই পাটের দাম বাড়াবার পক্ষে এগ্রিকাল্‌চার ডিপার্টমেণ্ট কিছুই কর্‌চেন না। সেখানে বিদেশী বণিকেরা কি কোরে বেশী টাকা পেতে পারেন এবং দেশী ব্যবসাদারগণ কি কোরে বেশী টাকা পেতে পারেন তারই ব্যবস্থা আর তাঁদের সুবিধার জন্য লক্ষ লক্ষ টাকার বরাদ্দ কোরে Jute Regulation Department সেখানে আছে। এ বৎসর যে jute acreage fix করা হয়েছে তাতে "grow more food"এর policy যা গভর্ণমেণ্ট নিয়েছেন তার বিশেষ ব্যাঘাত হবে। সেখানে অর্দ্ধেক jute growing landএ jute বুনিবার যে বরাদ্দ কোরেছেন তাতে দেশের লোকের ক্ষতি হবে। জুটের দাম ত বাড়বেই না বরং কমই হবে এবং ঐ পাটের জন্য খাদ্যশস্য বেশী উৎপন্ন হবে না। আমাদের দেশের লোক বোঝে না, ভুল বুঝে তাদের jute growing landএর অর্দ্ধেক জমিতে জুট বুন্‌বার ইচ্ছা হবে।

Industry Departmentএর কথা যদি চিন্তা করি ত সেখানে দেখি যে দেশের industry further কর্‌বার বিষয় ছাড়া আর সব industryর বিষয় সেখানে আছে। দেশের ব্যবসা বাণিজ্য আজ কাল যে ভাবে চলেছে, কতকগুলি লোক এদেশে war supply এবং অন্যান্য supply নিয়ে সেখানে যেভাবে ব্যবসা করচেন তাতে দেখা যায় যে তাঁরা কেবল কোটি কোটি টাকা আর করবার জন্য প্রস্তুত হয়ে আছেন। এ সম্বন্ধে enquiry কোরে

গভর্ণমেণ্ট বিহিত ব্যবস্থা না ক'রলে দেশের লোকের সর্ব্বনাশ হবে। Already hemp grower যারা তাদের সর্ব্বনাশ হচ্চে। দেশের গরীব লোকেরা যারা এই উৎপাদন নিয়ে আছে তাদের সর্ব্বনাশ হচ্চে। এ সম্বন্ধে গভর্ণমেণ্টের enquiry করা এবং বিহিত ব্যবস্থা করা দরকার।

Education সম্বন্ধে বল্‌তে গেলে প্রথমে বল্‌তে হয় যে Scheduled Casteএর জন্য education এবং service এই দুটোরই সুবিধা দরকার। এই দুদিনে তাদের এডুকেশনের অনেক অসুবিধা হয়েছে। আগে Scheduled Casteএর education সম্পর্কে ব্যবস্থা ছিল না। লীগ গভর্ণমেণ্ট যখন আসে এবং ফজলুল হক সাহেব Chief Minister হন তখন তাঁর হাত দিয়ে ঐ জন্য বিশেষ ব্যবস্থা হয়েছিল। সেজন্য তাঁরা চিরকাল আমাদের ধন্যবাদার্হ হয়ে থাক্‌বেন এবং চিরকাল তাঁদের নিকট কৃতজ্ঞ হয়ে থাক্‌ব। কিন্তু বুঝ্‌তে পারছি না কেন এই এক বৎসরে আমাদের সেই education grant দিন দিন কমে যাচ্চে এবং যে টাকা বরাদ্দ হচ্চে সে টাকারও benefit লোকেরা পাচ্চে না। স্কুলের grant, স্কুলের ছাত্রদের grant, কলেজের ছাত্রদের grant বৎসরের শেষে পায় যখন সেই টাকার utility তাদের কাছে কিছুই থাকে না। কর্ম্মচারীগুলিরও attitude এমন হয়েছে যে Scheduled Casteএর grant মঞ্জুর করার সময় তাদের ডিপার্টমেণ্টের সমস্ত কাজ শেষ কোরে যদি সময় থাকে তবে সেই কাজে হাত দেয়। তার ফলে হয় কি? না—এই grantএর টাকা কোন কাজে পৌঁছায় না। সে সম্বন্ধে আমরা গভর্ণমেণ্টের দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ কর্‌চি। অনেকবার নানাভাবে এ বিষয়ের প্রতি তাঁদের দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করেছি আরও কর্‌চি। তারপর Scheduled Casteএর special fund permanent করা দরকার বৎসরে ৫ লাখ টাকা recurring grant না হ'লে কিছুই হবে না। শুধু আশা ভরসার উপর নির্ভর কোরে চল্‌বার সময় নাই। আর এই শিক্ষা সম্বন্ধে বল্‌তে চাই যে কোন কোন মেম্বর বোলে গেছে যে primary education সমস্ত districtএ চালান উচিত নয়, যা হয়েছে সেই পর্য্যন্ত থাকুক্, কিন্তু আমরা বোল্‌তে চাই যে primary education সমস্ত districtএ প্রবর্ত্তন করা উচিত এবং তার necessary modification সম্বর করা উচিত। সেই সঙ্গে বল্‌তে চাই যে Secondary Education Bill যা pending রয়েছে তা ও পাশ করা উচিত। Calcutta Universityতে যে ভাবে educationএর ব্যবস্থা হচ্চে তাতে সেখানে জনসাধারণের স্বার্থ রক্ষা হচ্চে না। সেখানে গুটিকতক মুষ্টিমেয় লোকের ছেলে মেয়ের বিবাহ দেবার সুবিধা করা হয় এবং তাদের চাকরী বাক্‌রীর সুবিধা ও উন্নতির ব্যবস্থা হয়, কিন্তু জনসাধারণের স্বার্থ রক্ষার জন্য, তাদের শিক্ষার জন্য বিহিত ব্যবস্থা হচ্চে না। Coterie হিসাবে মুষ্টিমেয় কয়েকটী লোক তাঁদের নিজেদের ইচ্ছানুযায়ী নিজেদের স্বার্থ-সিদ্ধির উদ্দেশ্যে এই জিনিসটা চালাচ্ছেন।

আমি আর একটা বিষয় না বোলে পার্‌ছি না। সেটা এই food supply সম্বন্ধে। যে রকম অবস্থা তাতে আর ২ মাস পরে আমরা দেখ্‌তে পাব যে পল্লীগ্রামের লোকেরা এবং কলিকাতা সহরের গরীব লোকেরা খেতে পাবে না। উলঙ্গ হয়ে "হা অন্ন, হা অন্ন" কোরে রাস্তায় রাস্তায় ছুটবে। কিন্তু সেই ডিপার্টমেণ্টের কার্য্যাবলী যদি আজ লক্ষ্য করা যায় ত দেখা যাবে যে দেশের যত চোর সেই departmentএর underএ আশ্রয় পেয়ে বসেছে। সেখানে কতকগুলি ভাল লোক ভাল কর্ম্মচারী আছেন কিন্তু তাঁরা তাদের control ক'র্‌তে পার্‌চেন না। সেই চোরদের প্রভাব অত্যন্ত বেশী হয়েছে। সে দিকে সকলের দৃষ্টি যাওয়া দরকার এবং সেই চোরদের কি কোরে সেখান থেকে উৎখাত করা যায়—সে বিষয়ে সকলের চেষ্টা করা উচিত।

আমরা গভর্ণমেণ্টকে সমর্থন করি। গভর্ণমেণ্ট ভাল ভাবে চলুন এবং এ দেশের লোকের উপকার করুন। গভর্ণমেণ্টের কার্য্যাবলী সম্বন্ধে আমাদেরও বিশেষ দায়িত্ব রয়েছে। সকলে এখন এদিকে দৃষ্টি দিতে আরম্ভ করুন যেন দেশের লোক না খেয়ে মারা না যায়, আর ২ মাস পরে "হা অন্ন, হা অন্ন" কোরে ছুটে না বেড়ায়, এবং দেশের লোক আমরা রাস্তায় বেরুলে "চোর, চোর" কোরে আমাদের গায়ে ঢিল না ফেলে সে দিকে সজাগ হওয়া দরকার। আমি আর বেশী কিছু বলতে চাই না।

(The House was then adjourned for 15 minutes.)

(After adjournment.)

Mr. C. GRIFFITHS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the estimate for expenditure for the year 1943-44 is Rs. 17,54,85,000 while the estimate for 1937-38 was only Rs. 12,21,00,000 when provincial autonomy began. The rise of Rs. 5,33,85,000 is enormous, and we have had year after year to meet tax after tax. As we find the expenses of the nation-building departments such as Education, Agriculture and Public Health are badly curtailed, the budget becomes mainly a war budget.

The resignation of the Finance Minister, Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee, gave the House a jolt, and we were all anxious how the Hon'ble Mr. Fazlul Huq would present his budget. The Chief Minister is to be congratulated, for we find that he has given the House a greater jolt by first placing before us the serious problem of food shortage and other necessities of life. With the panic and confusion thus caused there is no likelihood for the Opposition to take over responsibility. Money is needed for civil defence and civil supplies and must be provided. The flow of goods into the markets must be maintained; looting and rioting must be prevented at all costs. Therefore, the police must be strengthened by a permanent staff of Civic Guards to which organisation I am proud to belong. The rank and file of my district, Entally, does not consist of refuse as Mr. Gupta says. Some of my boys today are serving in the Air Force and the Army, while others are out at sea. This is the refuse helping to keep the enemy at bay! (Hear! Hear!)

Mr. Fazlul Huq may present his budget under cover of a smokescreen, but he does so as he is a cute politician. It seems absurd to me that Government, on the one hand, should give their servants allowance for dearness and, on the other hand, control prices of certain articles. This only indicates where the shortage lies and aggravates the position. Should there have been a shortage of coal when India raises more coal per annum than any other part of the British Empire except Great Britain? We have had to pay as much as Rs. 5 per maund for coal. Surely this was due to bad management. The excuse of wagon shortage is a very poor one. Should there be a shortage of sugar in spite of exports from Java being stopped? The Indian sugar industry today is the largest in the world. The capital invested is between Rs. 25 to Rs. 30 crores. We have about 158 factories against 57 ten years ago. Just hear what the Managing Directors of one Company in Bengal had to say: "Sugar prices have been

fixed at rates insufficient to permit factories paying the rates demanded by cultivators for cane, and consequently many factories are unable to start crushing. Representations are being made to the Government and the industry awaits the result of these." And what is more, these Directors informed the shareholders that one factory made a loss while the other just covered its standing charges. I seriously ask, Sir, if there is any sense in a policy that kills such an important industry? (Shame!)

Again where is the Government campaign of "Grow More Food"? (Hear! Hear!) It is no use of my enlarging on the subject. The fact remains that the country cannot be run by placing incompetent men into responsible positions because they belong to the majority community. (Hear! Hear!) We want honest and efficient men irrespective of caste, colour or creed. The best brains are needed to serve the country. We want a Government of the united people—Muslims, Hindus and the British —all must share the responsibility. We must have the most suitable men. You cannot place a square peg in a round hole. (Cheers.)

Mr. SYED MUSTAQAWSAL HAQUE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the budget for the year 1943-44, presented by the Hon'ble Chief Minister who is also the Finance Minister, is a deficit budget. This budget has been prepared by the ex-Finance Minister, but the burden of presenting this budget has fallen on the Chief Minister. It is a deficit budget. The year is abnormal due to natural calamity and the war situation. There has been a heavy drainage on the provincial exchequer and so it should be a deficit budget, but at the same time Government have suggested certain taxation measures which we do not support. All possible attempts should be made first to reduce the expenditure. If that is not possible, then this House will support any taxation measures. In the past, we have supported taxation measures because we were given assurance that the money would be spent for nation-building departments. But in this year's budget, we find that that money has not been utilised for nation-building departments on the plea that due to war emergency all national activities have to be stopped.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have heard with rapt attention the speech of one of the ex-Ministers who in attacking this Government has said many things. One of his charges was that this Ministry in the matter of appointments showed partiality, specially some of their relations have been provided. We expected honest criticism from an ex-Minister and of his eminence and personality, but we have found that today certain grievances have been made against this Ministry which, I think, are personal. We have found that he has attacked one of the Ministers and with great difficulty he has discovered that one of the members was at Darjeeling for the purchase of potatoes. But, Sir, we also know the activities of that ex-Minister. We found him in the interior of my district for purchasing not anything for Government but for things for his own personal use. (Nawabzada K. NASARULLAH: For what?) For molasses. He has charged a Minister for appointing some men with inferior abilities, but we know also how many relations of that ex-Minister have been provided when he was a Minister.

We also know well how many supplementary questions we asked in this House about the appointment of his relations and supporters. However, I leave it at that.

I shall now discuss the budget. In the last year's speech I indicated the line of retrenchment and reduction of expenditure which I do not like to discuss today. Government before inducing members of this House should first satisfy them that they have made every attempt to reduce the expenditure, but without doing that Government cannot justify a demand for fresh taxation. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, today most of the nation-building departments have been made to starve, especially the Education Department. I know in backward areas, especially the Muslim and Scheduled Caste areas, new schools have been established, but in this year's budget we find that no provision has been made for grants-in-aid for these schools, for scolarships of Muslim students. Since the year 1937 up to the present time every year we have found increased number of stipends and scholarships and grants-in-aid for Muslim and Scheduled Castes, but this year we find that no provision has been made excepting one college. (Nawabzada K. NASARULLAH: Where is that college?) (A VOICE: Chakhar.)

Sir, Government have provided money for "Grow More Food" campaign. They have also provided money for agriculture and for irrigation. Money provided on these items is to a great extent heavy. I can point out certain *bil* areas in the districts of Khulna, Jessore, Faridpur and Barisal and Khulna Sadar. If a small amount were spent for irrigation in these areas, I am certain that the food problem of this province could be solved. Most of the dead and dying rivers in central Bengal, especially in the districts of Khulna, Jessore and Barisal, require immediate resuscitation. In the budget for this year we find not a single pie allotted for this purpose.

The question of food problem is very acute this year. We find that only nine months' provision has been made. But what about the remaining period of three months? There will be scarcity of food and scarcity has already begun. I have seen in today's newspaper that Dumuria *hât* has been looted. I have also got a letter from home saying that rice is being sold at Rs. 15 in the district of Khulna which has been declared by Government to be a surplus district with regard to rice.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Directorate of Civil Supplies established by this Government to solve the food problem is pursuing a very wrong policy. The policy adopted by this Government is entirely based on wrong figures and wrong statistics. I can say that my district Khulna is a deficit district. But unfortunately this Government, and especially this department, has declared Khulna to be a surplus district on the basis of the report supplied to them by the chaukidar, and I am told very reliably that Government agents have begun purchasing paddy in the Satkhira and Bagerhat subdivisions. There also the ordinary local traders, *mahajans* and the public are being deprived of their purchases for home consumption with the result that in certain areas people are going on without food. This is a serious state of things, and I would request the Hon'ble Minister who is taking note of this fact to see that this matter is immediately enquired into.

Khulna is not a surplus district and Government should stop purchasing by their agents in that district. There is scarcity of rice and there are other scarcities, namely, of kerosene, coal and sugar. If Government seriously tackle this problem, I think this can easily be solved.

Sir, in the budget for this year we expected that provision would be made for the establishment of a Scheduled Caste hostel in the Bagerhat B.Sc. College. We demanded this from the Government and were given assurance of that. I am informing the Government through you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there are 72 Scheduled Caste students in the Bagerhat College, but there is no provision for their hostel accommodation, and I request Government to look into the matter.

As regards the rivers in the Bagerhat subdivision last year Government took up the resuscitation of some rivers and khals, viz., Chitra river, Nalua river, Biskhali Khal, and Alaipur Khal. Most probably Government will take up the work of the resuscitation of rivers and the rest will be abandoned. If that is a fact, Government should consider that money that has been spent on these projects should not be wasted for stopping this scheme. With these words I resume my seat.

Khan Sahib Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMED: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the Central Legislature when the Railway budget was placed it was characterized as a prosperous budget as it showed crores of rupees as profits but here, in Bengal, the budget, in contradistinction, may well be termed a bankrupt's budget, though the Hon'ble gentleman who presented the budget, is, by Providence, not a bankrupt The Hon'ble the Chief-*cum*-Finance Minister told us in his budget speech that our net indebtedness to the Government of India on the 31st March, 1944, will stand at Rs. 4 crores and 75 lakhs. At this heavy debt some express their concern and others complacently remark that the debt operates on Bengal Revenues as a lien only but the province has not yet been sold away.

Sir, my own view is, yes, you borrow as much as you like within your paying capacity but the borrowings must be not for playing ducks and drakes but for definite schemes of mass ameliorative measures for whom the Government exists. The borrowings must yield a return of equal advantages and benefits to those for whom it is alleged to have been incurred. But what do we find here? We find absence of schemes and plannings, want of imagination and lack of sympathy. If things are allowed to drift in their usual hackneyed way, then where is the justification of these heavy borrowings?

Sir, last year Dr. Mookerjee characterised the budget as a war budget, but this year the Hon'ble Finance Minister has advisedly dropped the epithet "war" though the war has drawn within the borders of Bengal; as experience has shown the military activities within the borders of Bengal have brought large sums of money into the province. Government is getting large sums of money from the Centre to meet expenses of A.R.P., Civic Guards and similar other allied organisations. So, Sir, it remains yet to be seen if these borrowings are incurred for the purpose of building a better Bengal and a more prosperous Bengal.

Sir, when the present Ministerial Party consisting of heterogenous elements came into being we heard slogans "Better Bengal", "Prosperous Bengal" and "solution of the *dal-bhat* problem of the poor agriculturists". Now time has come to take stock if these tall talks have been implemented. Let us here cast our eyes to the countryside. We find desolation and destitution riding rampant amongst the teeming millions who form the bulk of the population of the country. The irony of fate is although they are the producers of the country's wealth, they have not a morsel to keep their body and flesh together. Malaria is ruthlessly carrying hundreds of people. But is there any arrangement for quinine? Sir, I may speak of the district of Tippera. It is not within the living memory of the people to have witnessed such havocs committed by malaria in the district particularly in northern Tippera. Each village lost from 200 to 400 people roughly. Poor people could not arrange new cloth for *kafan*. They had to do this with old and worn cloth. From this, Sir, you can easily imagine to what stage of destitution the people have been dragged. This is, Sir, one aspect of the Better Bengal and the more Prosperous Bengal promised to us by the present Ministry.

Sir, it needs hardly to be stressed that the present Ministry is a stupendous failure and the Budget is absolutely disappointing. There is no indication in the Budget how to solve the life-and-death problems now facing the country.

Sir, I come from Tippera which is the nerve centre of the Eastern Frontier of the Indian war theatre. With the heavy influx of military people and military labour into the district there is an abnormal pressure on the normal supply of the district which is already a deficit district. There is practically no food policy pursued by the Government although it was most needed there. One District Supply Officer was appointed and when he has studied the problem and could do something for the poor people, he has been transferred. Whims and caprices seem to ride rampant there. The prices of rice and other essential necessaries of life have soared up like anything and they have, to all intents and purposes, become absolutely prohibitive. Rice sells at Rs. 16/17 per maund in Tippera. The people have got panic-stricken. Government have not a word of solace for these untold miseries of the people. The inevitable result has followed. Numberless thefts, dacoities, burglaries, lootings took place in Tippera within a month. The situation, I am afraid, may worsen. Wide-spread rebellions and agrarian troubles may break out. The very foundation of the social structure may be pulled down. There is yet time but no time to lose. Government must immediately come out with a definite food policy. Immediate steps should be taken to effect control of prices and control of supplies. Control of prices without control of supplies throws wide open the door to corruption, bribery, jobbery, nepotism and favouritism. This is with regard to food policy.

The next point I would take up is the consideration of A.R.P. organisation in Comilla. Here a colossal injustice has been done to the Muslim community. One Muslim gentleman, an M.A., B.C.S., was appointed

A.R.P. officer and Deputy Controller of Tippera. He took his training in Calcutta. He organised the whole A.R.P. organisation there by undergoing Herculean labours. But one fine morning he was transferred to Brahmanbaria as a Circle Officer and a Matriculate Hindu has been appointed in his place. This latter gentleman has not had the training even.

(The member having reached his time-limit resumed his seat.)

Maulvi RAJIBUDDIN TARAFDAR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, আজ ১৯৪৩-৪৪ সালের বাজেট আলোচনা হচ্ছে কিন্তু এই আলোচনার বিশেষ কিছু সার্থকতা আছে বলে মনে হয় না। কারণ বৎসরের শেষে বাজেটের অবস্থা যে কি দাঁড়াবে আজ আমরা সে কথা বলতে পারি না। তবে এ কথা আমি বলতে পারি যে, বাজেটের আলোচনা ও সমালোচনা যতই করুন না কেন এই বাজেটের পরিবর্তন বা পরিবর্দ্ধনের কোন আশা ভরসা নাই। ইতিপূর্ব্বে বাজেটের সমালোচনার পর বাজেটের পরিবর্তনের কোন নমুনা পাওয়া যায় নাই। সুতরাং এই সব সমালোচনা অরণ্যে রোদন ছাড়া আর কিছুই নয়।

এই বাজেটে যে ৩৩ লক্ষ টাকা অতিরিক্ত কর ধার্য্যের প্রস্তাব করা হয়েছে আমি মোটেই তার পক্ষপাতী নই। বৎসরের শেষে যেখানে এক কোটি পঁচাত্তর লক্ষ টাকার অধিক ঘাটতি থাকবে সেখানে মাত্র তেত্রিশ লক্ষ টাকা নিয়া "ইচা মাছ খেয়ে রবিবার নষ্ট করার কোন মানে হয় না"। তারপর চিরদিনই এই বাজেটে একদেশদর্শিতার পরিচয় পাওয়া যায় সুতরাং এ বাজেট ভ্রান্তিপূর্ণ। বাংলার বাজেট যাকে বলা হচ্ছে এটা বাংলার বাজেট বটে কিন্তু North Bengalকে বাদ দিয়ে এই বাজেট করা হয়েছে। কোন দিনই উত্তর বঙ্গের প্রতি আমাদের Cabinetএর দৃষ্টি নাই। উত্তর বঙ্গের পাট, সরিষা, কাঠ, চা, তামাক, গাঁজা বাজেটের পুষ্টি সাধন করিয়া আসিতেছে সেই উত্তর বাংলার প্রতি গভর্ণমেণ্ট দৃষ্টিহীন। জনহিত দূরের কথা ২।১টা চাকুরী তাহাও ভিন্ন স্থানের লোকেরা গিয়া North Bengalকে লুটপাট করে খাচ্ছে। স্থানীয় বেকার শিক্ষিত যুবকেরা চাকুরী পায় না আর বাংলার বিভিন্ন স্থান থেকে লোক এনে Sub-Registrar, Co-operative Inspector প্রভৃতি পদে বাহাল করা হয়। জুট Departmentএ বাংলা কেন বিহার উড়িষ্যা এমন কি পাঞ্জাব হইতে লোক আনা হইয়াছে। এরা সব এসে উত্তর বাংলাকে একেবারে লুট করে খাচ্ছে। যাক্ এ সব কথা বলে কোন লাভ নেই। যা চিরদিন হয়েছে আজও তাই হবে। "মার আর ধর পিঠে বেঁধেছি কুলো, বক আর ঝকো কানে দিয়াছি তুলো"।। প্রধান মন্ত্রীর আসন যে দিন উত্তর বাংলা দখল করিবে সেই দিন যদি এ দুঃখের অবসান হয়। বাজেটে ভিখারীদের জন্য ৬।।০ লক্ষ টাকা ব্যয় বরাদ্দ ধরা হয়েছে ইহা ভাল কথা ইহা আমারও জীবনের সাধনা। কিন্তু Vagrancy Billএ এক দিকে যেমন দেশের চিত্তের ইঙ্গিত করা হয়েছে অন্য দিকে তেমনি দেশের লোকদের নিছক ফাঁকি দেওয়া হয়েছে। এই Bill আমি পড়েছি ইহা দ্বারা ভিখারীদের উদ্ধার করা চলিবে না। বরং কলিকাতায় যে সমস্ত ভিখারী আছে তাদের তাড়িয়ে গ্রামবাসীদের ঘাড়ে চাপিয়ে দেবার ফন্দি ছাড়া আর কিছুই নাই। যখন Bill এসেম্‌ব্লিতে আসবে তখন দেখা যাবে। বাজেটে General Education খাতে ১১ লক্ষ টাকা কমান হয়েছে। একে বাংলা মূর্খতার দিকে দ্রুত চলেছে, গভর্ণমেণ্টও বাংলাদেশকে মূর্খতার অন্ধকারে ফেলিবার চেষ্টা করিতেছেন। বোধ হয় এই জন্য যে বাংলাদেশ মূর্খ হয়ে থাক আর আমরা সুখে রাজত্ব করি। যেন কেহ আমাদের ভুল ধরিতে না পারে। তারপর Primary Educationএর কথা। প্রাইমারী শিক্ষার জন্য যে কর ধার্য্য হইয়াছে ইহা রহিত করিয়া বিনা করে ইহা প্রবর্ত্তন করা উচিত। আমি বিশ্বাস করি যে Primary

Educationএর পূর্ণ উন্নতি না হইলে দেশের উন্নতি কিছুতেই সম্ভবপর নহে। কিন্তু Adult Education তারও আগে প্রয়োজন। কিন্তু বাজেটে ইহার জন্য কোন টাকা ইয়ারমার্ক করা হয় নাই। আমরা বহু চেষ্টা করিয়া আমাদের districtএ ইহা প্রবর্ত্তন করেছিলাম। অনেক চেষ্টা করে সেখানে ৩০০ নাইট স্কুল করা হয়েছিল। কিন্তু দুঃখের বিষয় এই Cabinetএর অনুগৃহীত কয়েকজন লোক District Board হাতে নিয়ে সেই ৩০০ নাইট স্কুল একেবারেই উঠাইয়া দিয়েছেন। "যেমন নেতা তেমনী অনুসরণকারী"। মন্ত্রী সভার গোড়াতেই যখন এই রকম গলদ তখন তাঁহাদের অনুগৃহীতদের নিকট আমরা কি আশা করতে পারি। বর্ত্তমান সময়ে শুনিলেও প্রাণ শিহরিয়া উঠে জনস্বাস্থ্য বিভাগে ১০ লক্ষ টাকা কম করা হয়েছে। মন্ত্রী মহোদয়গণের কি ইচ্ছা সব মানুষ ম'রে বাংলা দেশ সাফ্ হয়ে যাক্ আর মন্ত্রী মহাশয়েরা নির্ব্বিবাদে কল্‌কাতায় বসে হাওয়া খান? যাদের টাকা নিয়ে রাজত্ব যাঁদের অনুগ্রহে মিনিষ্টারী করে মাসে ৩ হাজার টাকা বেতন ও ভাতা নিচ্ছেন তাদের মেরে ফেলে দিয়ে এই রাজত্ব কয় দিন চলবে জানি না।

তারপর এই যে "Grow more food" campaign এটা চালিয়ে লক্ষ টাকা ব্যয় করেছেন। ইহা সম্পূর্ণ ব্যর্থ হয়েছে যারা ইহার সফলতার দাবী করেন তাদের লজ্জা আছে কি না জানি না।

তারপর Civil Supply ইহাকে বলে "কানা ছেলের নাম পদ্মলোচন"। সমস্ত civil population আজ না খেয়ে না দেয়ে পেটে পাথর বেন্ধে পড়ে আছে আর Civil Supply করছেন মিলিটারীদের খাওয়ার যোগাড়। এই খাতে যে টাকাটা ব্যয় করা হচ্ছে তা একেবারেই ব্যর্থ। আমি বগুড়া জেলা সম্বন্ধে দুই একটা কথা বলব আপনাদের শুনতে হবে। সেখানে প্রায় অর্দ্ধেক লোকের দুবেলা অন্ন জুটে না চিন্তা করলে চক্ষু স্থির হয়ে যায় তাদের এই অবস্থা দেখলে। এই মন্ত্রী সভার উপর ঘৃণা আসে। কত লোক যে না খেতে পেয়ে মরে যাচ্ছে, ছেঁড়া কাপড় পরে আমাদের কাছে আসে তার ইয়ত্তা নেই। তাদের দুঃখ-দুর্দ্দশার কাহিনী বর্ণনা করে। আমরা Coalition পার্টির মেম্বর। আমরা গভর্ণমেণ্টের নিন্দা করতে পারি না। মন্ত্রীরাও দরিদ্রের দুঃখ বুঝে না। India Government জুট লোন বাবদ ২ লক্ষ ৫০ হাজার টাকা পাট উৎপাদনকারীদের লোন দেওয়ার জন্য Bengal গভর্ণমেণ্টকে দিয়াছেন এই টাকার সহিত Bengal Government আরও ৫০ হাজার টাকা দিবেন কিন্তু ঐ টাকা পাট চাষীরা পায় নাই যাহাও পাইয়াছিল তাহা ডিসেম্বরে নিয়ে আবার জানুয়ারীতে পরিশোধের কথা আছে ইহা পাট চাষীদের সাহায্য করা নয় তাহাদের সহিত পরিহাস করা।

Khan Bahadur A. F. M. ABDUR RAHMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the course of the general discussion of the Budget demands for the current year I would like to bring to the notice of the House the manner in which the administration of my subdivision is being carried on apart from the carrying on of vendetta against the Muslim League in my subdivision which seems to be the declared policy of the present Cabinet. I would like to mention in this House about the careless manner in which they discharge their responsibility to the people. The House might not be aware of the railway strike of the Basirhat-Baraset Light Railway. In the latter part of January last, the men of the Loco department of Messrs. Martin & Co. went on strike over the dearness allowance question. The strike continued over nine days. The fact of the strike was brought to the notice

of the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Communications and Works Department but the strikers called off the strike on the 9th day on the assurance of the Company that their grievances would be redressed. During this long strike period Government absolutely did nothing and showed complete indifference in the matter. The postal communication between Basirhat subdivision and other parts of the country was completely suspended. Exports and imports were totally stopped. We have to depend for many essential foodstuffs on import from Calcutta and the prices of those articles went beyond the reach of men of even moderate means. The difficulties of the travelling public can better be imagined than described. In the end of January last there was a threat of strike of the railway workers again. I brought this fact to the notice of the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Communications and Works Department again and also to the notice of his Secretary. The workers have again gone on strike from Friday last and we are suffering from the same difficulties as we had suffered on the previous occasion. Presumably, Messrs. Martin & Co. did not implement the promise they had made to the workers on the previous occasion. Sir, I cannot understand why Government should not intervene in this matter and remove the causes of the strike. They should not show complete helplessness in the matter. They have a responsibility to the people to look into their difficulties and as such we claim that they should at once intervene in the matter and settle the dispute.

Sir, I now turn to the question of food-supply which is the problem of all the problems of the country. The Hon'ble the Chief Minister has assured the House through his budget statement that he has been able to control through the co-operation of the Government of India the supplies in imported wheat, *dal*, domestic coal, sugar and kerosene, but we have not been fully assured that there will be proper distribution of those articles. From the manner in which the distribution of these articles have been made in the past we have very little faith in Government measures. But let us hope for the best but the hope deferred only maketh the heart sick. The Hon'ble the Chief Minister has complained in his statement that he could not effectively control the prices of essential commodities owing to the fact that the new department of the Directorate of Civil Supplies has been set up with raw and untrained materials. This may be partially true, but, Sir, the real reason to my mind is that neither the Government nor the machinery working under them have been taught to share the sufferings of the people just as their own sufferings. Sir, Government in a Press communiqué has directed that they would purchase rice and paddy from my subdivision, but I do not know why they consider our subdivision to be a surplus area where even ordinary coarse rice is selling at Rs. 15 per maund in the local markets. It shows that there is a considerable dearth of rice in the subdivision, but still Government would consider the subdivision to be a surplus area. I do not know what is the basis of such conclusion of Government.

Sir, the question of "grow more food" has got some prominence in the statement of the Hon'ble the Chief Minister but, Sir, only by the distribution of seeds and cuttings of sugarcane in some selected districts, especially

the districts and subdivisions wherefrom the Progressive Coalition Party M.L.A.'s come and through especially selected agents and by the display of posters here and there and especially in the Writers' Buildings we cannot bring more food to the country. The problem is very difficult and complex and it should be tackled with all the seriousness that it demands. We cannot make the scheme successful unless we have proper irrigation facilities throughout the country.

Sir, another local problem I would like to bring to the notice of the House is that we have a very large number of *golpata* huts in our subdivision, but owing to the denial policy of Government *golpata* cannot be brought from the Sundarbans as a result of which these huts cannot be repaired. Sir, a large number of people in our subdivision lived on this trade and they are now completely out of employment. This is a matter which deserves serious consideration of Government.

In conclusion I would like to submit, Sir, that there is a very great danger ahead; the people are completely disgusted with the manner in which the administration of the province has been carried on by the present Ministry. It is high time that they should take things by the forelock.

Mr. ANANDILAL PODDAR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I confess I am unable to face the future with greater confidence like the Chief Minister and Minister for Finance, as I am afraid darker days are ahead of us unless the political deadlock in India is resolved and India is allowed to wage her own war against the enemy. I quite realise that the Hon'ble Minister had to prepare a most disinteresting budget on behalf of a Government which has no voice in solving the "many novel and complex problems" with which Bengal has been faced. Bengal is not only on the war front but has already experienced a few enemy air-raids and I realise that civil administration in the province had to be carried on against the background of huge war preparations. Naturally, the budget does not contain any feature, which can inspire the people in this country inasmuch as there is no message of hope, not even an attempt to alleviate their present miseries. Last year the then Finance Minister described his budget as nation-saving, but the prevailing circumstances do not as yet show any sign of safety. The only nation-saving item in the budget relates to Civil Defence, but I am constrained to say that the department concerned has not been able to create any enthusiasm in the province. I am told a good many retired officials have been recruited in the A.R.P. service and from all accounts the personnel of the Civic Guards has not been able to create any confidence either. Enlistment, I understand, is refused on political grounds and I wonder why educated young men could not be recruited in large numbers. I have seen Press notes relating to some good work done by Home Guards, but from the increasing number of dacoities in the countryside it does not appear that the Home Guards have been of any assistance to the police, the story of whose efficiency will be unfolded when the annals of the year 1942 will be written. But when a devastating flood and cyclone visited Midnapore and a portion of Diamond Harbour, the Government miserably failed in giving timely succour to the dying population and shamelessly prevented

public bodies from even visiting the area on military grounds. The amount allotted for relieving the distress of the flood-stricken people in these areas is too meagre, as Government is well aware that before the rains set in the people that have survived will find no shelter to lay their heads and meanwhile cholera as also other epidemic diseases are taking a heavy toll from among these starving people. And then, public health estimates have been reduced by several lakhs. May I know, Sir, whether this is a nation-saving or a nation-killing budget?

Coming to the food problem, Sir, I am glad the Hon'ble Chief Minister and Minister of Finance has admitted the failure of the control measures so far taken, but I have my doubts whether the new appointments in the Civil Supply Directorate will go a great way towards the solution of the food problem. There is an element of threat in his reference to the trade but without going into the details today, I would suggest to the Chief Minister to cleanse the Augean stable in the Department. I must congratulate the Government on some of the new appointments, but I am sure the problem cannot be tackled unless the trade, particularly all the Indian Chambers of Commerce are taken into confidence, and purchasing and distributing agents are appointed in consultation with them.

Like Public Health, I find, Education and Industries also have been treated with utter neglect. I know that education can wait but victory cannot; but I find that when utmost care is being taken for continuing the education of hundreds of refugee children from war-worn allied countries, a paltry sum has been allotted for anyhow maintaining the show for the children of the soil.

It was expected that at least a big programme for industrial development would be laid down by taking full advantage of the war situation. But the budget estimates have only provided about a lakh of rupees for high quality silk for parachutes for the Defence Services. A high-sounding committee was appointed pretty long ago to report on the various possibilities of industrial growth in this unfortunate province and I understand about a dozen interim reports have been submitted by the said committee but today we are in a position to produce only a few thousand yards of silk.

If no money can be spared for the nation-building departments, why then continue the Sales Tax? It is an irony of fate that the then Finance Minister who had the Sales Tax Bill swallowed by the House in the name of nation-building department as well as his successor, I mean Doctor Mookerjee, who had to nurse this monstrous child of his predecessor, are no longer in the Council of Ministers. But the poor consumers have to pay 60 lakhs of rupees in course of their daily purchases and the traders, besides being put to a lot of inconveniences, have to dance attendance on the Commercial Tax Officers and keep a number of books to satisfy the formalities of the law in these days of paper shortage. I make bold to say that the tax-payers have been hoodwinked and the mischief that has been done to the trade as well as the consumers should be undone at the earliest possible moment.

Then, Sir, Agriculture has been relegated to a most unimportant place in the budget. It is expected to carry on the special Rural Uplift scheme with the paltry amount of Rs. 47,000 and perhaps the money will be spent on literature and postage. There is no bold programme for improving the livestock and the public have yet to know to what extent the peasant in this country has been able to take advantage of the Agricultural Research that is being carried on for the last many years. This is an age of slogans and we have been importing so many of them from the West even in the sphere of administration. "Grow More Food" is the recent slogan which had its origin at New Delhi and has been now taken up by all the provinces. But I do not know if the department concerned has formulated any concrete scheme for actually growing more food in this province. I am sure the department has not even made a survey of the possibilities in this behalf and I doubt if any appreciable increase has been made in the yield as a direct result of this propaganda. A huge amount is being spent for carrying out the jute restriction scheme, but I think the same staff can be utilised for the "Grow More Food" Campaign, thus saving a lot of the tax-payer's money.

I am glad that the new taxation will not touch the people in the countryside much, but I wish there was no further increase in Electric duty. This will hit a large number of poor consumers, to whom the little light that will be available amidst a black-out atmosphere, will be too costly and with the prices of the daily necessaries rising from day to day, this additional burden will be keenly felt by thousands of middle class and poor families as also small industries in the urban area. Not long ago the Corporation of Calcutta formulated a scheme for producing electricity to meet their own requirements and also proposed to supply for domestic purposes at a cheap rate of one anna per unit. The Government rejected the proposal but now the Government wants to increase the duty to one anna. Could there be any justification for it? I would appeal to the Chief Minister not to increase the burden at this stage.

I find the budget estimates do not include any provisions on account of a subvention for the Calcutta Corporation. I wonder who is responsible for this omission. A special officer has been appointed to look into the financial position of the Corporation, which has also been hard hit due to circumstances created by the war situation and I think it has been grossly unfair to make no provision for the subvention.

I am glad that the Chief Minister has admitted in his budget speech that apart from the increased provision on account of dearness allowance, the additional provision included in the budget is almost exclusively for the continuation of new measures mainly connected with the war, which have been initiated in the current year. And as a result of it, we shall have to borrow one crore six lakhs to meet our share of the poolable Civil Defence expenditure and on 31st March, 1944, we shall be owing India 4 crores 75 lakhs.

Sir, the war that is being carried on along the frontier of Bengal is a war of the United Nations and so far as India is concerned, the brunt—the

whole of it—must be borne by the Government of India, if not by His Majesty's Government. To call certain duties as Civil Defence work and obtain the money for the same from the people of this province who have nothing to do with the conducting of the war operations is an eye-wash. The Government of India is to all appearances controlling the Civil Defence work in the provinces and the people of this province have no say in the matter. Did not the Government refuse to enlarge the Calcutta University Training Corps? It is, therefore, only just and proper that the expenditure on measures connected with war should be entirely borne by India, if not by the United Nations and not by the province, which happens to be on the war front braving all the horrors of a modern totalitarian war. Our Chief Minister has been fighting many a battle of wits and I am confident he will take up the matter with the Central Government so that this loan is converted into a contribution for carrying on war measures on behalf of the whole of India.

Adjournment.

The House was then adjourned at 7-45 p.m. till 3-45 p.m. on Wednesday, the 24th February, 1943, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Wednesday, the 24th February, 1943, at 3-45 p.m.

Present:

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. SYED JALALUDDIN HASHEMY) in the Chair, 7 Hon'ble Ministers and 188 members.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answer was given)

Pachwai shops and excise revenue on the basis of price of common rice.

***59. Mr. BANKU BEHARI MANDAL:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Excise and Forest Department aware—

(*i*) that the excise revenue of *pachwai* shops is calculated on the basis of the price of common rice published in the *Calcutta Gazette*;

(*ii*) that the Gazette price of rice is much lower than the actual market price; and

(*iii*) that the *pachwai* vendors are suffering losses for the lower price of rice quoted in the *Calcutta Gazette*?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what action he proposes to take in the matter?

MINISTER in charge of the EXCISE and FOREST DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Upendra Nath Barman): (*a*) (*i*) Licence fees in respect of *pachwai* are realised in relation to a basic price of dry rice which is fixed from time to time on the basis of the average price of rice as published in the *Calcutta Gazette*.

(*ii*), (*iii*) and (*b*) The matter is already under investigation.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware what hardship is being caused everywhere by the delay due to the Government's deliberations over the problem for such a long time?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I do not consider that the honourable member knows the facts or that he is right. In fact from the 1st of September, 1941, the basic price of rice and the selling price also has been modified four times, the last occasion being on the 1st February, 1943.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that the price fixed by Government generally does not rule the market?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: On the last occasion, i.e., on the 1st February, 1943, the price was Rs. 12 per maund. I do not think that the price is higher now.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that nowhere in Bengal, in Calcutta or in the mofussil rice can be obtained at Rs. 12 per maund?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: There is practically no *pachawai* shop in Calcutta. So this question does not arise.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: No, no, rice from which it is prepared.

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: It would have been appropriate had any honourable member who has knowledge about *pachawai* put this question. (Laughter.)

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(answers to which were laid on the table)

Sinking of wells in Rangpur district.

18. Mr. PUSPAJIT BARMA: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing, year by year, Union by Union, for the last 7 years from 1935 to 1942 the number of—

(*i*) tube wells,
(*ii*) concrete cement ring wells, and
(*iii*) masonry wells,

sunk in the district of Rangpur?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the cost met for their sinking from—

(*i*) the Central Government Rural Development Fund, and
(*ii*) the Bengal Government's water-supply fund?

MINISTER in charge of the PUBLIC HEALTH and LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu): The information is not readily available and the collection thereof will involve an amount of time and labour which will not be justifiable in war time.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister tell us when this question reached the office of the Hon'ble Minister?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Very recently.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that in the District Board offices a list of tube-wells sunk by them is maintained?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: If it is in the District Board offices, as the honourable member who puts this question is a member of the District Board, it would be easier for him to ask the District Board to supply him with the answers.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: With reference to the answer just now given by the Hon'ble Minister, is he aware of the fact that sometimes we are not in a position to get the assistance from the District Boards?

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I am afraid I am not responsible for that.

Mirik country spirit shop.

19. Mr. DAMBER SINGH GURUNG: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Forest and Excise Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the licence of the Mirik country spirit shop vendor was cancelled about two or three years back?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the ground on which the licence was cancelled?

(*c*) Is it a fact that the licence has since been restored?

(*d*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason for restoring the licence and giving it to a Purdahnashin lady?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: (*a*) No.

(*b*) to (*d*) Do not arise.

STARRED QUESTION

(to which oral answer was given)

Mymensingh District School Board.

***17. Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to state whether the Government have issued any order under section 18 (*4*) of the Bengal Rural Primary Education Act, 1930, empowering the Vice-President of Mymensingh District School Board to exercise all the powers of the President till a President is elected and his election approved by the Government?

(*b*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Legal Remembrancer was consulted in the matter?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons therefor?

(*d*) Is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of consulting the Legal Remembrancer in the matter?

MINISTER in charge of the EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. Abdul Karim): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) The Legal Remembrancer has been consulted.

(*c*) and (*d*) Do not arise.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the opinion of the Legal Remembrancer before the House?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: The opinion is that he can carry on the business until the new President is appointed.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what was the exact opinion?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: The file is not with me, but if the honourable member wants to see that opinion, I can show him.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: I want to see the opinion.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: As I have said, the file is not with me.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how long the Vice-President will be allowed to function under section 18 (4) of the Rural Primary Education Act?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: Until a new President is regularly and properly elected.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government has directed for the election of any President of the District School Board in Mymensingh?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: Yes. Government directed immediately after the election of the President was disaprpoved and then the matter went to the Collector, and the Collector made a reference to the Local Government that the existing rules make no provision for the manner in which fresh elections should be held, there being provision only for first election and subsequent elections. Accordingly we have framed rules and those draft rules have been published in the "Calcutta Gazette" of the 14th January.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: In view of the fact that the rules have been published in the "Calcutta Gazette," will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when the election of the District School Board is about to be held if the Government have given direction for holding an election of the President of the District School Board of Mymensingh?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: That cannot be done because under the rules the Government notification will have to be in circulation up to 31st March and after hearing any objections that may come, the rules will be finally adopted and then only any direction can be given.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that the election will not be held unless and until the members of the Progressive Coalition Party form a majority there?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question does not arise.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason why these rules were not published in the "Calcutta Gazette" earlier than the 14th of January?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: Because time was taken in obtaining the opinion asked for by the District Magistrate from the Legal Remembrancer.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how many months Government took to obtain the opinion of the Legal Remembrancer?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: I do not know how long Government took in this particular case. Generally it is a month or so.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when Government set aside the election of the President of the District School Board in Mymensingh?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. ABDUL KARIM: I cannot recollect, but it was sometime in the middle of 1942.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(answers to which were laid on the table)

Partnership in the Kalimpong country spirit shop.

14. Mr. DAMBER SINGH GURUNG: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Forest and Excise Department be pleased to state when the name of Parbati Debi, the Excise Vendress of Kalimpong country spirit shop, has been removed from the list of licence-holders?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason thereof?

(*c*) Is it a fact that one Gouri Sankar Prosad was taken as a partner of Parbati Debi?

(*d*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether Gouri Sankar Prosad is now the only licensee of the shop;

(*ii*) whether Parbati Debi is dead;

(*iii*) whether further partnership will be allowed to Gouri Sankar Prosad?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: (*a*) In 1940.

(*b*) Her own request.

(*c*) and (*d*) (*i*) Yes.

(*ii*) No.

(*iii*) No such proposal has been received.

Mr. DAMBER SINGH GURUNG: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether partnerships are permissible in the case of excise shops, liquor shops and drug shops?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I think it is permissible; otherwise it could not have been done. I will look into the matter.

Mr. DAMBER SINGH GURUNG: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether there is any chance of shops being vacated if partnerships are allowed in this way?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: That is a problematical question.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if Government have agreed to a policy that when vacancies do arise in the hills, as far as practicable members of the hill tribes will be given excise licences?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I ask for notice.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that in case partnerships are permitted and partners after having obtained new partners retire it will be extremely difficult for the hill men to get excise vending licences in future? Is the Hon'ble Minister aware of this fact?

The Hon'ble Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: I think that this is a question which infers something and is therefore difficult to answer. I do not think I can answer it now.

Supplementaries to Unstarred Question No. 1.

1. Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what are the places where openings are proposed to be made on roads and railway lines?

The Hon'ble Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: I shall have to take the honourable member to a class and show him with the help of a map.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: The Hon'ble Minister can very well name those places.

The Hon'ble Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: I can tell the House that on account of the bridges built by the Bengal and Assam Railway many of the rivers have been practically choked out and the same thing happened to the Chandana. After the Government Engineers have examined the rivers, the Engineers are of opinion that unless it is tested, not only about the re-excavation but also other spill channels which are to be opened up, in the River Research Institute, nothing can be done. There are District Board roads and they cover two or three places. My friend knows the road from Pangsha to Kamarkhali. The opinion of the Engineers is that unless the whole thing is tested in the hydraulic laboratory the scheme cannot be taken up. It involves a vast amount of expenditure. I have taken up the matter in hand and I have brought Mr. N. K Bose from the Punjab. The River Institute will begin to function very soon.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that Mr. Sen Gupta made a contour survey and also made other surveys and thus completed a scheme?

The Hon'ble Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: That is a fact. I have already told you that it was estimated that Rs. 1,65,000 would be the expenditure. Now after the re-survey it has been estimated for the re-excavation of the Chandana and the opening up of the spill channels and also the opening up of bridges the cost would go up 3 times the original estimate.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that the questioner put in a proposal for the excavation of the Chandana in 4 instalments?

The Hon'ble Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: He has referred to 4 instalments but what I have already said is this. We have to find out how the scheme works, whether these bunds should be cut through, whether this river Chandana should be connected with the river Madhumati at the lower end, etc., etc. All these things have to be considered and the whole thing should be tested. That is why the Engineers are definitely of the opinion that unless these are tested in the hydraulic laboratory the money which the Government may spend will be absolutely wasted. That is the case not only in connection with the Chandana system but also in connection with many other rivers. It is hoped that Government will be able to take up all these questions as soon as possible.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if from the scheme which is already before Government a portion is to be excluded and through Bamori the flow is directed to the Madhumati, which is only one mile? This scheme is approved by the Superintending Engineer.

The Hon'ble Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: That is not one mile but 4 miles. If you cut the lower end from the Chandana and connect it with Madhumati it becomes 4 miles.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that this portion entirely forms a separate block where operation is easier today?

The Hon'ble Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: I am sorry I cannot tell you unless the Engineers examine that.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when the remodelling is expected to be taken up and by which date is it expected to be finished?

The Hon'ble Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: I have already told you that the River Institute will begin to function very soon in 3 or 4 months' time. The experiment on the model rivers will be taken up first and my Engineers say that it is very likely that the Chandana system may be taken up first and some other system afterwards. I do not know if war goes on in this fashion whether much progress can be made especially from the point of view of funds. But so far as my friend's question is concerned I can assure him I have very carefully studied this system and many other

systems. I am not giving him an off-hand answer. On behalf of Government I can tell him that the Government is very much alive to the situation that has been created by the closing of the river Chandana.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Can it be expected that the Chandana system will be taken up first when the River Institute begins to function?

The Hon'ble Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: Yes, may be.

Ruling on a point of order raised by Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Dr. Sanyal on a point of order has raised the question whether this House has a right to know from the Minister concerned what advice the Hon'ble Minister has given to the Governor in a matter which is directly within the special responsibility of the Governor.

I have carefully gone into the question raised by Dr. Sanyal but in view of the fact that I do not consider the point raised by him a point of order at all, I do not desire to go into the question whether the particular matter referred to by him is within the scope of Governor's special responsibility or his individual judgment. The whole question hinges on the point whether the Speaker has got the power to compel a Minister to disclose to the House as to what advice he tendered to the Governor in a case where the Minister's advice is not mandatory upon the Governor. In my view it is absolutely within the discretion of the Minister to take the House into confidence or not and Dr. Sanyal's remedy does not lie in raising a point of order in the House but otherwise. I must at the same time state that the message of Lord Linlithgow, dated the 21st June, 1937, in defining the position of the Ministers vis-a-vis the Governor clearly lays down that the Ministers are entitled if they so desire publicly to state their responsibility for any particular decision or even the advice they tendered in a particular case to the Governor. So, in this particular case the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq will be within his rights if he discloses to this House what advice he has given to the Governor.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Thank you, Sir.

Akher-i-Chaharshomba and Sivaratri.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: May I inform you, Sir, that Akher-i-Chaharshomba falls on the 3rd of March and the Sivaratri on the 4th? We have got a programme for the 3rd March.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I shall look into the matter.

GENERAL DISCUSSION OF THE BUDGET.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I had little intention of intervening in the general discussions of the budget, because, as you are well aware, we are meeting under the shadow of a great tragedy and meeting as we do under such circumstances it leaves very little enthusiasm for us to take interest in these debates. Those who belong to the official Congress expect little either from this or from any other Government. Sir, my justification, if at all, to speak a few words to-day is

merely to invite the attention of Government to some of the points raised by previous speakers and to add a few of mine, particularly because in course of the debates held during the last 3 days we found many Hon'ble Ministers absent and the party behind them taking little or no interest in the general discussions.

Sir, the budget which we have been dealing with this time has been more or less based on a background which is very peculiar. On the one hand we are drawn virtually into the midst of the war, and the preparation of a budget in war time must be on a basis fundamentally different from peace time budgeting and on the other we had to face a serious catastrophe in the shape of natural calamities in certain parts of this province a few months ago as well as through internal disturbances. Sir, in an atmosphere like this or on a background like this it could be presumed that the budget of this year will lack that consistency which ordinarily is expected, but surely we could legitimately hope that the Hon'ble the Finance Minister, who is also the Chief Minister, would in the course of the presentation of his budget let us know something about the Government's policy in regard to some of the important matters that are engaging public attention.

This budget, so far as we can ascertain, is a purely Secretariat budget. It is a budget which does not reveal the mind of the Ministry, which does not let us know what policy or programme they propose to follow to meet either the immediate situation or with a long-term view of ameliorating public requirements. But, Sir, as a Secretariat budget it has two important merits, and I congratulate the framers of the budget on those two grounds at least. As a Secretariat budget it has hardly any patronage distributed as had been the case in previous budgets. On previous occasions we had drawn attention to a number of attempts made on the policy of "You scratch my back and I scratch yours" under which one Hon'ble Minister wanted to help his native village and another Hon'ble Minister wanted to get as many of his pet theories nurtured as possible. Sir, except a small item of Rs. 45,000 for Chakhar College it is difficult to discover in the present budget anything of that character. There is also another merit of this budget, namely, that it does not provide for lump grants on immature or half-matured schemes as we experienced in previous years. Sir, this lump grant provision was on many occasions severely commented upon by us in the House as well as in the Public Accounts Committee because we felt that it was nothing more than an attempt to capture the imagination of the country without any real intention of bringing good or of doing anything beneficent to the people. These two merits are appreciated but at the same time the demerits of the present budget cannot be ignored and these are also due to its essential character as a Secretariat budget. These demerits, as we have had to point out on numerous occasions in the past, consist in the soaring expenses on General Administration, on Police, on Jails and the like We notice that in the present budget there has been a very large increase in expenditure on the maintenance of the services whereas so far as the beneficent nation-building departments are concerned they are either starved or they are treated in a most niggardly

way. I have, Sir, prepared a statement giving the financial position in an abstract form of accounts of actuals from 1937-38 to the budget of 1943-44*; and, Sir, this shows that under total Revenue Receipts from Rs. 13,01,00,000 in 1937-38 we are now budgeting for Rs. 16,02,00,000 in 1943-44, thereby expecting an increase of more than 3 crores of rupees. In the total Revenue Expenditure, on the other hand, as against Rs. 11,83,00,000 in 1937-38 we are now budgeting for Rs. 17,55,00,000 in 1943-44—an increase of nearly 6 crores of rupees in the course of the last seven years. The net result is that on the revenue account while we started with a surplus of Rs. 1,08,00,000 in 1937-38, the first year of Provincial Autonomy, we are now faced with a deficit of Rs. 1,53,00,000 in the budget for 1943-44; and, Sir, from 1940-41 onwards we are having repeated years of deficit budgets. We had Rs. 91 lakhs of deficit in 1940-41, Rs. 56 lakhs in 1941-42, in the revised budget of 1942-43 we had a deficit budget of Rs. 154 lakhs, and in the budget before us we have a deficit of Rs. 153 lakhs. Sir, I have also analysed briefly the accounts of the previous years compared with the present budget with regard to expenses on General Administration, Police, Jails, Extraordinary Charges on the one hand and on Education, Medical, Public Health, Agriculture, Co-operation, Industries, Civil Works on the other. I would crave your indulgence, Sir, to treat these figures as an appendix to my speech if the House has no objection so that the patience of the House may not be taxed by my quoting the large number of figures to the House.

***Financial Position, Accounts and Budget (1937-38 to 1943-44) of the Government of Bengal, showing comparative variations in the expenditure on nation-building departments :**

(In Lakhs of Rupees.)

Heads.	Actuals, 1937-38.	Actuals, 1938-39.	Actuals, 1939-40.	Actuals, 1940-41.	Actuals, 1941-42.	Revised, 1942-43.	Budget, 1943-44	Variations from 1938-39
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1. Total Revenue Receipts.	13,01	12,77	14,32	13,54	14,94	15,66	16,02	+3,25
2. Total Revenue Expenditure.	11,93	12,77	13,71	14,45	15,50	17,22	17,55	+4,78
3. Surplus + or Deficit—.	+1,08	..	+61	−91	−56	−1,54	−1,53	−1,53
4. Indebtedness to Government of India.	..	..	..	..	1,42	4,50	5,00	..
5. Expenses on General Administration.	1,41·9	1,46·0	1,53 1	1,50·7	1,54·5	1,56·0	1,63·9	+17·9
6. Police ..	2,24·2	2,21 3	2,28 3	2,34·5	2,49 6	2,69·0	2,89 4	+68·1
7. Jails ..	40·8	34 3	34·4	36·0	45·7	54·4	57 2	+22·9
8. Extraordinary charges.	..	..	3·0	7·4	70 6	1,57 5	1,61·5	+1,61·5
9. Education ..	1,26	1,44	1,51	1,61	1,64	1,66	1,76	+32
10. Medical ..	53	56	56	56	53	54 2	54 8	−1·2
11. Public Health	30	40·6	39·4	39 8	39·3	38·4	40·2	−·4
12. Agriculture ..	..	14	22	69	50	69−17	52	+38 with Advance to Agriculture.
13. Co-operation	12	13	14	14	16 4	15 6	16·7	+3·7
14. Industries ..	16	13	15	14·6	16	16 3	17·8	+4·8
15. Communications and Works.	1,20	1,29	1,42	1,39	1,37	1,11	1,18	−11
16. Supplementary Budget provision.	..	..	83·36	1,67·19	2,39·44	3,22 27	..	..

Sir, so far as these figures show, General Administration has gone up from Rs. 141·9 lakhs in 1937-38 to Rs. 163·9 lakhs in 1943-44. For purposes of comparison I should think that the year 1938-39 should be more dependable, because in that year the Ministers functioning under the new regime were in a position to have their budget properly prepared whereas in the first year it was not possible for the Ministers to frame the budget on their own responsibility straightaway. So if we take the budget of 1938-39 as the standard budget framed by the Provincial Ministers when there was no deficit, we will find that from Rs. 221 lakhs on Police in 1938-39 the present budget comes up to Rs. 289·4 lakhs, that is, an increase of Rs. 68 lakhs and more in the coming budget. On Jails in 1938-39 the provision was for Rs. 34·3 lakhs and in the budget before us the provision is for Rs. 57·2 lakhs—the increase is by Rs. 22 lakhs and 9 thousand. And, Sir, Extraordinary Charges is a new item which has directly arisen out of the war situation. Here, Sir, we have actuals from 1939-40 and in that year it was Rs. 3 lakhs, in 1940-41 Rs. 7·4 lakhs, in 1941-42 it went up to Rs. 70·6 lakhs, in the revised budget we have Rs. 157·5 lakhs, and it stands at Rs. 161·5 lakhs in the coming budget. There is thus an increase of up to Rs. 161·5 lakhs in the coming budget compared to 1938-39.

On the other hand, in the beneficent departments we find that on Education from Rs. 144 lakhs in 1938-39 there has been an increase in the present budget to Rs. 176 lakhs—an increase of Rs. 32 lakhs only. On Medical it was Rs. 56 lakhs in 1938-39 and it is only Rs. 54·8 lakhs in the coming budget—a drop of Rs. 1 lakh and more. Similarly, Sir, there is a slight drop in the Public Health budget where from Rs. 40·6 lakhs it has come down to Rs. 40·2 lakhs; in Agriculture, Sir, it is difficult to give a comparison because during the last few years there has been spasmodic expansion of the privileges of loans to agriculturists which has upset the budget in a material degree and comparisons cannot be made. With regard to Co-operation, it has gone up from Rs. 13 lakhs to Rs. 16 lakhs 7 thousand; Industries from Rs. 13 lakhs to Rs. 17 lakhs 8 thousand and Communications from Rs. 1 crore and 29 lakhs there has been a fall to Rs. 1 crore and 18 lakhs, that is, a drop by Rs. 11 lakhs in the budget before us.

Sir, another feature of the budget to which I want to draw attention is this. During the last 3 years there has been such poor budgeting that every year we are faced with an increasing amount of supplementary provisions. This shows how the departments concerned and particularly the Ministry care for the opinion of the House and substantial sums are left over after the amounts are spent away to be just registered by the vote of the Assembly towards the latter part and particularly towards the end of the year concerned. In 1939-40 we had a supplementary budget for Rs. 83 lakhs 36 thousand; in 1940-41 the supplementary grant provided for Rs. 1 crore 67 lakhs 19 thousand; in 1941-42, Rs. 2 crores 39 lakhs 44 thousand and in the current year it has gone up to Rs. 3 crores 22 lakhs 27 thousand. Sir, Rs. 3 crores 22 lakhs 27 thousand as against a total provision of Rs. 17 crores is surely a very big amount which ought to have come earlier in the year and we would have known how much of it we would permit to be spent.

Sir, these are some of the figures which require very careful scrutiny and study. I submit that it reveals a very sad state of affairs. We are again faced with a prolonged period of deficits and in spite of the fact that we have permitted ourselves to be taxed in different ways we are not in a position to increase the beneficent activities on account of which some of these taxes were cheerfully—if not cheerfully, at least with moderate grudge—accepted by the country. Sir, every section of this House has recorded its great disappointment, if not deep regret, for the postponement of many beneficent measures in the name of which new taxations, particularly the sales tax and the raw jute tax were imposed. The postponement or slowing down at least of the following items is deeply deplored and I would just give a catalogue of these items as I do not propose to take much more time than is absolutely necessary.

The first postponement which we regret is the postponement in expenditure from the Road Development Fund for improving roads in the province. If, Sir, as has been stated in the budget, road development had to be slowed down for want of materials, surely there was a possibility of improving the village roads which would require nothing more than mere mother earth. There is no planning. The road development that we have been always reminded of was the road development that our Chief Engineers and technicians thought of, namely, big tarred roads which require something like one lakh or more or nearabout per mile to construct, but I had spoken in this House on previous, occasions and had handed over a note to the Minister-in-charge showing how in Bombay the Congress Government, as soon as they came to power there, had instituted an enquiry and they found that it was possible to improve village roads without spending more than Rs. 2,000 a mile. Unfortunately, there is no imagination here. While we do not get materials like cement, tar or stone, we can certainly have village roads improved and this money that has now not been drawn upon could be more fruitfully utilised for improving the roads in the rural areas for which Bengal is very much crying.

The second matter the postponement of which we deeply regret is the expenditure on Rural Reconstruction as mentioned on page 49, Rural Water-supply as mentioned on page 62 and Rural Sanitation as well as Rural Public Health services on the same page of the Red Book.

Thirdly, Sir, the training of primary school teachers and the scheme for adult education mentioned on page 58 of the Red Book have been postponed. These two have been postponed although on previous occasions assurances were given that the scheme for training of primary school teachers was being pushed to a very great extent and although we know that without properly trained teachers for primary schools it is impossible for us to extend education in the rural areas for which the country so much stands in need.

Fourthly, Sir, we have improvement of sadar hospitals postponed; that is mentioned on page 61. Then again, the climatic sanatorium for tuberculosis which was mentioned in previous year's budget has been given a complete go-by. The contribution to Indian Institute for Medical

Research, another valuable institution, which is doing yeoman's service and which was given Rs. 10,000 in the last year and year before, could not be given a provision in the current year—I am noting with satisfaction of course the unspoken admisison of the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge through a gesture, that he has already provided for it in the budget from some other fund—probably there will be some surplus somewhere—which he will be drawing upon. However, we note that with some satisfaction.

Then, Sir, we have postponement of some schemes in the Industries Department, and here I must submit that the Industries Department has all along been putting up schemes which hardly ever mature. Here is a scheme for Metal Research Institute which has not matured and is not likely to mature. There is also a provision for development for fishery and setting up of a Fishery Department which was much trumpeted on the last occasion and which, we now understand, is going to be virtually dropped. Certainly this is not a matter which would require any material that would go for war purposes and surely, Sir, this is a matter which Bengal needs very much at the moment when the "Grow More Food" campaign is going on.

We have also important schemes for improvement of drainage postponed, particularly the Peali-Bidyadhari Scheme in the suburbs of Calcutta which had been hanging fire for a pretty long time.

And last but not the least it was no small surprise to all of us that the "Grow More Food" campaign, which had got 18¾ lakhs of rupees provided in the current budget has got nothing provided in the coming year's budget. (Shame!) This is a scandalous affair. We cannot understand how the "Grow More Food" campaign can be carried on without a single farthing provided for in the budget. (Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Leave it to the Directorate. Don't care.)

Sir, we would like also further light to be thrown on certain other matters regarding which I expected Government would come forward with some statement of policy. These matters come under two categories. We would first of all require the Government to give us a more clear idea about what arrangement they have made with the Central Government regarding allocation of Civil Defence expenditure and other extraordinary expenses arising directly or indirectly out of the war conditions. These include expenses on A. R. P. measures, on Civic Guard and Home Guard organisations, civil evacuation and refugee relief work, measures to meet effects of the denial policy, civil transport requisitioning measures, dearness allowances to be paid to various organisations and bodies, additional police for emergency in vulnerable areas and separation allowances and also the Directorate of Civil Supplies as well as amounts that are required for contribution to some local bodies that are seriously affected due to situation created by the war. Mr. Gladding has drawn attention to some of these and I am entirely at one with him that in our arguments with the Government of India we should try to emphasise that Bengal is in the war zone and it is the responsibility for the whole of India to bear the expenses incurred on this side due to Bengal being in the proximity of the war area.

Sir, the second class relates to matters which had agitated public mind to a very large extent due to encroachment on civil liberties and abuses of powers under the Defence of India Rules. These include arrests and detentions, trials by special courts and Magistrates and gagging of the press. I understand, Sir, that the press gagging has gone on to such an extent that even a notice purporting to be issued by the Sheriff of Calcutta for holding a meeting in Calcutta somewhere which the Sheriff will choose to record our prayer for the long life of Mahatmaji who is now fasting has been withheld and the press has been directed not to publish that even.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is irrelevant. Why do you bring in the Sheriff's meeting here?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: This prohibition of public meetings as also the imposition and levy of collective fines require a statement from the Hon'ble Minister to clarify the policy that Government is proposing to pursue and, Sir, we require some light on what they mention as war time security measures mentioned at page 34 of the Red Book.

I had certain other points to draw attention to, but I will conclude by inviting your attention to one thing that Hon'ble Minister, Finance, has himself admitted, namely, that additional provisions included in the budget are exclusively for financing new measures mainly connected with the war. While he frankly admitted that, let not this create a new privileged class. I am very much alarmed that a new privileged class is going to be created in this province as has been done in every other country. While reading the other day an interesting book by a famous British writer Douglas Reed "All our to-morrows" I came across a passage which I shall present to the Hon'ble Minister for his careful study and examination, so that he will avoid repetition of such things here. Douglas Reed writes to the following effect: Our Rulers may have failed to achieve success or victory on the battle fronts at Dunkirk, at Hongkong, at Greece, at Singapore, at Malay and in Burma. But every day new offices are created requiring new officers and staff who in their turn draw up new forms requiring new assistants. Thus the paperchase is on. We cannot obtain our bread, purchase our clothing, light our fires without filling in forms, handing in coupons, paying in so many jacks-in-office. Every "Artful Dodger" in the country strives to get a job in or round the fringe of officialdom. It means power, privilege, immunity and exemption. Every good thing in life is reserved for such persons, for these are doing "vital national work". To strive hard in the humble environment of one's village, to produce food and material, for the society, to rear a family and live honestly under rigid economy is no vital national work and does not count. Everything else counts if you have the right friend in the right place.

Mr. SYED BADRUDDUJA: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, having had no time for the last few days to study the provisions of the budget I decided not to take part in the discussion this afternoon. But I feel that any silence after the few speeches that have been delivered will not be worthwhile. Sir, I have therefore ventured to make certain suggestions and comments.

Sir, I thought that the various sections of this House, in view of the gravity of the situation that confronts us at the present moment, would pool all their resources for evolving a scheme that while maintaining internal security in the province would try to defeat the forces of destruction that have been let loose today; but instead of that I have been amazed to find during the last 2 or 3 days that various speakers in the Opposition taking advantage of the opportunity concentrated all their attacks on the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Bengal. It is so unfortunate. I was rather amazed to have the confession of an ex-Minister yesterday. I was amazed all the more that he should have assumed the role of Pontiff of Islam. Mr. Mukunda Behary Mullick yesterday waxed eloquent in criticising the Hon'ble Chief Minister forgetting for the present that the Chief Minister of Bengal enjoys the confidence and respect of his own community. (Cries of "question" from the Opposition Benches.) (Uproar.) Sir, I want your protection. (Uproar,) Have patience and listen to me. As Secretary of the Progressive Coalition Party which contains the largest section of the Scheduled Caste representatives in this House I speak with authority that the Chief Minister of Bengal commands greater respect and confidence of the Scheduled Caste community than any member of the Opposition today. That statement is borne out by what my esteemed friend Mr. Rasik Lal Biswas said yesterday, that they are grateful to Mr. Fazlul Huq who as Education Minister has provided for Scheduled Caste education to an extent which no Education Minister including the then Minister of Education and now Leader of the Opposition, Sir Nazimuddin, has ever ventured. Have they the courage to face the truth, have they the courage to confront the truth? I say this with an amount of authority that the Scheduled Caste people today are being bluffed, are being deluded into thinking that they have better friends on the other side. Human memories are very short; and the memories of disappointed ex-Ministers are still shorter, or they would have hesitated before casting such reflections and aspersions upon one who has done so much for Scheduled Caste education. Not that all that has been provided for the Scheduled Caste people is enough. I have got the fullest sympathy for that community in their aspirations and demands. No community in Bengal has suffered more, no community in Bengal has been tortured with greater refinement of cruelty and savagery, no community in Bengal has been more deprived of their legitimate rights and privileges and of facilities for their self-expression during centuries as the Scheduled Caste people. I have the fullest sympathy with them, and I would demand a definite assurance from the Hon'ble Chief Minister to provide more and more money for their education, so that according to their own ideas and convictions the Scheduled Caste people might also contribute to the social and cultural evolution of the common motherland. (Interruptions.)

Sir, truth is always bitter. I say this with all the emphasis at my command, with all the seriousness at my disposal, with all the earnestness that I can bring to bear upon the question that the Scheduled Caste people should be provided with more facilities for the amelioration of their condition and I would appeal to the Hon'ble Chief Minister in this respect. But let those political manoeuvres, let not those who have been conspiring——

Babu KSHETRA NATH SINGHA: On a point of order, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

Babu KSHETRA NATH SINGHA: Is the honourable member canvassing for the Scheduled Caste people? (Laughter from the Opposition Benches.)

My. SYED BADRUDDUJA: Sir, I raised a point of order in your absence as to whether any particular member of this House, while discussing the provisions of the budget, could discuss the policy of Government. The Chairman who presided ruled me out of order. Every member was at liberty to discuss the present policy of Government with reference to the provisions of the budget. When members of the Opposition were let loose to discuss anything, when members of the other side were allowed to indulge in anything, why not a member of this side in order to retort, in order to contradict the false and mischievous statements that have been made on the floor of the House—why a member of this House should not be allowed to speak with sufficient fervour?

Sir, I could have dismissed without any serious notice those effusions of Mr. Mullick, but for his audacity to have assumed the role of Pontiff of Islam. I admire Mr. Mullick's temerity that he should assume the role of Pontiff of Islam and treat us to homilies about Islam and our duties and responsibilities to the Muslim nation. In fresh fields and pastures new Mr. Mullick must have derived fresh inspiration.

But, Sir, I can assure him, not only from him and quarters which are quite hostile to the spirit and genius of Islam but even from that pampered ignorance, even from that pampered insolence that bangs the doors against an honourable settlement we cannot expect from him any deep knowledge about the Islamic Shariat, Hadith and about the real duties and responsibilities of Muslims to our God and Prophet. So, I can dismiss him without any serious notice.

Now, Sir, I come to another ex-Minister, Mr. Tamizuddin Khan. Sir, fools rush in where Angels fear to tread. The gentleman has changed colour many times during the last 5 years—sometimes an oppositionist, sometimes a coalitionist, sometimes a Muslim Leaguer——

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: On a point of order, Sir. Is the honourable member entitled to use that expression? Has any member any right to call another member a fool? Is that expression parliamentary?

Mr. SYED BADRUDDUJA: I have never called any one a fool. But if the cap fits any member, I do not know.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Sir, I want a ruling from you whether that expression is parliamentary.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: A member cannot call another member a fool.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Then, he must apologise.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have always said that members should not indulge in provocative, insulting or abusive words. I have given that direction not only today but from day to day I have given that direction. I hope members will follow that direction.

Mr. SYED BADRUDDUJA: That is an oft-quoted expression. However I bow to your ruling.

Sometimes an oppositionist, sometimes a coalitionist, sometimes an independent Proja Leader, sometimes a ministerialist and sometimes a disappointed Minister trying to establish a liaison and contact with other disappointed Ministers in Bengal, it might be possible for him to cast aspersions upon the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Bengal. I can assure him that all the manœuvring, all the wire-pullings, all the mischievous propaganda that has been carried on from day to day for the last 15 months have borne no fruit. They may try to give a wrong lead to public opinion in Bengal, but Providence is there to protect us. Sir, in the name of the Prophet of Islam, in the name of the noblest traditions and ideals of Islam that have descended down to us from our great forbears——

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Come to the budget under discussion.

Mr. SYED BADRUDDOJA: Yesterday I had definitely the opinion of the Chairman that a man was entitled to discuss the policy of the Government and contradict the baseless statements that are made on the floor of the House by members of the Opposition. Sir, I have a right to criticise those statements because after all when they criticise they indulge in filthy language, they indulge in hopeless aspersions and baseless insinuations and I have every right to retort and contradict them.

Coming to the provisions of the budget, Sir——

Maulvi ABUL HASHIM: I would like to know from the Chair whether oratory of the Maidan brand is permitted in this House.

Mr. SYED BADRUDDOJA: I can answer this political wire-puller by saying that this is not the Maidan. It is the Legislative Assembly, it is the forum of the House where people on the other side have indulged in bitter reflections upon the Hon'ble Chief Minister.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: You will have to answer more.

Mr. SYED BADRUDDUJA: I have every answer before public opinion of the country.

Sir, I have not been allowed to discuss the budget by their constant interruptions because, Sir, they cannot stand the truth, because they cannot stand honest criticism of the methods they have adopted. Mr. Tamizuddin Khan yesterday when criticising the policy of the Government said that the Government carried on a mischievous propaganda against the Muslim League. I say that that it is thoroughly incorrect and it is an absolute lie. I say most emphatically, Sir, never for a single moment, even under the most provocative circumstances have we uttered a single syllable which might be

construed as a reflection on the ideals or the scheme of the All-India Muslim League. This is not only incorrect but a mischievous fabrication. It is a deliberate lie. I hurl that charge in the face of the honourable member who has made it and contradict it with all the emphasis that I can command.

Coming to the provisions of the budget, it is true that under the heads "Education" and "Public Health" there has been a reduction. (Interruption.) The honourable member on the other side is adopting the psychology of the maidan.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Jungle law.

Mr. SYED BADRUDDUJA: Sir.....

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Your time is over. Have you finished?

Mr. SYED BADRUDDUJA: It is not possible to continue in this atmosphere.

(At this stage the member, on reaching the time limit, resumed his seat.)

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, if a condemnation is to be uttered about the financial statement of the Hon'ble and learned Chief Minister, I can give no better proof than the speech just delivered by his chief lieutenant. There is not one argument to support, not one explanation for the hash that has been made of the budget. The honourable member for Jangipur or Murshidabad wherever he comes from has yet to learn the etiquette and.....

Mr. SYED BADRUDDUJA: I most emphatically protest against that insinuation.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: If you will permit me, Sir, the honourable member for Jangipur has yet to learn the methods of discussing financial matters and the budget of a province like Bengal. He does not understand it: he cannot understand it.

Mr. SYED BADRUDDUJA: I understand it much better than a Sindhi.

(Interruption.)

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Sir, I extend my sympathy to the Honble Chief Minister.

Mr. SYED BADRUDDUJA: Talking rubbish.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I want your ruling whether those words apply to my speech, whether that expression is parliamentary.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: The honourable member for Jangipur has called my speech "rubbish". I shall not go down to his level and.....

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is a matter of opinion.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, before you give your ruling, I have to submit that any language, even the worst criticism of any speech, cannot be treated as unparliamentary. Let Mr. Siddiqi before he raises a point of order like this look up relevant books and study them.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: I am glad that the honourable member from the Presidency Division Municipal General Constituency has come out to defend a member of a tribe similar to his own. Sir, I always try to keep up a higher standard of my own if I can, and I shall not allow myself to be disturbed in this way.

Sir, the Hon'ble the Chief Minister deserves our sympathy first because the honourable member for the University of Calcutta left him in a terrible lurch. He had to carry the baby left by the ex-Finance Minister and during this short period of time it would have been difficult for any Minister to understand the whole Budget and present it to us in a satisfactory manner. Sir, it is easy to see and a reading of the Financial Statement makes it clear that a piece from here and a piece from there have been brought together and a jigsaw puzzle has been placed before the House without a head or without a tail.

Another criticism I have to offer, Sir, is that too many cooks have spoiled the broth. One Minister goes to Delhi and discusses one aspect of the Finances of Bengal. Another Minister goes and decides about the loan the Government of India should give us for the purchase of jute. A third Minister goes and discusses how much we are going to get to buy rice or purchase some other edible commodity. These cooks have spoiled the broth and the result is that the Hon'ble the Chief Minister, who is overworked, who has to run a party with a conglomeration of many varieties of human beings, who has to run the most important department in the Government of Bengal, the Police Department, has now taken up another very important department of Government, the Finance Department. It is, Sir, this threefold blessing that has made a mess of every aspect of the Government of Bengal and its administration, in the Budget that has been presented to us. Sir, we shall have the opportunity of discussing its other aspects during the discussion on the various Demands. I should, however, just passingly, refer to the taxation policy as adumbrated in the Financial Statement. The sales tax has not been a very happy form of taxation and it has not brought much money to the Government. I wish the Ministers had revised their policy in regard to that, but the proposed measures of taxation in regard to electricity are really of a type which shows that no deep attempt was made, nor full attention paid to its details, imposition and administration. Increase in this taxation on Industries would be welcome because Industries are flourishing. But if there is to be a general rise per unit the use of electricity in lighting houses or in running fans would be a burden. The Hon'ble the Finance Minister, as I may call him—and one of my protests against him, in whose hands Providence has placed our destiny, is that a province like Bengal has been allowed to go on without a Finance Minister for all these months, especially during the last quarter when full attention had to be given to finances—cannot, could not in the circumstances of

the case, look at things as a Finance Minister which a Minister of Finance with just one department could have done. For instance, Sir, a haphazard scheme of industrial policy as adumbrated in the Financial Statement gives one lakh of rupees for the improvement of the silk industry in our province. I am absolutely certain that this one lakh of rupees would not have come to us, had it not been for the fact that Bengal is producing very little of silk cloth except that used in airplanes. Sir, so long as there is war and parachute cloth is required, so long we shall get this encouragement. But there are a thousand and one industries, small and large, which require a planned policy, which require consideration, not at the hand of an overworked man who cannot find time to take them up, but at the hand of an independent Finance Minister.

Sir, there are many points to which I can refer in a general way but one big gap in the Financial Statement is that the Hon'ble the Finance Minister has not been able to devote any attention to the problem of reconstruction after the war. Every man and woman in the world is now thinking in terms of post-war reconstruction. But he is thinking in terms of doles from the Centre. We do not want to live on doles from Delhi. What I want is that we should stand on our own legs. Bengal can afford to borrow. With jute to back it up we can borrow not four but forty crores of rupees. These Ministers of ours who look to their immediate petty surroundings and cannot dream of a future, of the post-war reconstruction of Bengal, have made a mess of the magnificent financial position and opportunities before us. When the time comes when the depression, financial, industrial and otherwise, faces us in the post-war period, the only party responsible for it will be the present set of Ministers who left us in the lurch at the time when we could have prepared ourselves to meet that danger.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I rise to discuss the Budget and not to indulge in billingsgate. But before I enter into a discussion of the Budget and of the Revised Estimates, I think I should preface my remarks with a few observations on the accounts of 1941-42. The accounts show what a heavy under-estimate was made of the revenue receipts just to present the story of a huge deficit concocted to secure an easy passage for the Sales Tax. Taxes on income not only made up for the loss of fifteen lakhs of rupees under the head "Customs" but together they yielded Rs. 46 lakhs more than the Budget estimates. Excise yielded Rs. 13¼ lakhs more. Forests Rs. 7 lakhs, and Registration Rs. 3 lakhs. The net result of such under-estimates is that on the whole accounts show better revenue receipts to the extent of about one crore—Rs. 97 lakhs to be precise—an actual total of Rs. 14·94 crores against an anticipated total of Rs. 13·97 crores.

As against these additional revenues, what were the economies made in expenditure after the Legislature was induced to pass the new taxation measures of that year?

The Hon'ble Chief Minister's statement does not particularly indicate them. But we find on a comparison of the original budget and the actual account that Education, Medical, Public Health, Industries and Co-operation

had 34 lakhs less than the budget provisions, while four out of them were the very departments that were promised increased expenditure to the tune of 34 lakhs. In other words, instead of getting 34 lakhs more they got 34 lakhs less. Was it in pursuance of a policy of all-round cut due to the progress of the war? No. For expenditure under the following heads increased by 25 lakhs: Police by 13 lakhs, Jails by 8 lakhs, Administration of Justice by 4 lakhs. The promises of "extension of the existing services" —I am quoting the words of the ex-Finance Minister's speech—in the fields of Education, Sanitation, Industries and Co-operation were thus fiulfilled! It is for the Legislature to pass taxation measures, it is for others to have the proceeds allocated. The sooner this fact about the democracy in action in India is realised, the better in the interests of Truth.

Turning to the current year we find almost the same story repeated in the Revised Estimates. Income-tax, again, is going to help us more in the adversity that has overtaken Customs, Excise enormously to the misfortune of the consuming people and largely because of the recent introduction of a cheaper variety of liquor and Forests due in part to the demand of the Supply Department. But when we take note of the better receipts due to the war, we cannot afford to forget how our large sources of revenue in Customs, Stamps and even Land Revenue have been adversely affected by the war and what large receipts we have been deprived of by the unlinking of the mounting Railway surplus from the Income-tax. To this unlinking can be traced all the misfortunes of our budgetary position since 1940-41 when expenditure due to the war has been growing particularly heavy.

On the expenditure side the story of large reductions under nation-building heads has been retold. A calamity of tremendous magnitude happened to the Province in last October. Fifty lakhs had to be found to meet the tragic situation and 50 lakhs, as I read the revised estimates, have been found not by all-round economy but by heavy reductions—44 and 10 lakhs respectively—under "Civil Works" and "Public Health". An extra expenditure of 12 lakhs had to be allowed to the Police and that has been met apparently by cutting Education down, not by 10 lakhs as the Chief Minister's speech indicates, but by 11·62 lakhs. I can well imagine Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee almost bursting into tears over such an arrangement. Much less than 10 lakhs would have gone a great way to save the schools in the emergency areas from ruin, but the Hon'ble Minister in charge was perhaps too much preoccupied with the Registration Department to devote his thoughts to the problems of these institutions and their unfortunate teachers or perhaps thought that a sop to the Calcutta teachers meant a solution of this major problem. Otherwise how could he agree to the surrender of 10 lakhs passes my understanding.

Sir, one question more about the revised estimates, namely, why an extra police expenditure of 15½ lakhs has been screened behind the Miscellaneous item under head 63. In its truimphant march the Police expenditure in this Province, protected by the heavy armour of reservation and special responsibility, had no occasion and can have no possible occasion to take cover indeed.

Now passing on to the consideration of the estimates for 1943-44 we see the prospect of a deficit of 154 lakhs on revenue account. Even to a casual observer it will appear that had there been no occasion for Extraordinary expenditure to the tune of 161 lakhs there would have been no deficit. True it is that owing to the war much of the better receipts under "Income-tax" is due and in the next year we expect about 60 lakhs more than the amount budgeted in 1942-43, but we cannot afford to forget that the loss of about a crore under the head "Customs" inflicted by the war is going to be continued. In this connection we cannot also afford to be oblivious of the great loss from which the Bengal budget is suffering on account of the Revenue Distribution Order ofMarch 1940. The order is due to expire, if I remember aright, by March, 1943. If so, what action, if any, has been taken by the Government of India in that respect and what representation, if any, has the Government of Bengal made for relief against the continuation of that order ought to have been disclosed in the budget speech of the Chief Minister? When Railway surplus is overflowing and exceeding all bounds of expectation, can a Province, distracted by thirst, run about in search of muddy pools? If the snapped link can be restored, Bengal can face all the war adversity that has overtaken its other revenue heads, such as Stamps, Motor Vehicles receipts and receipts from Other Taxes and Duties calmly and meet much more than the Extraordinary charges due to the war, I suppose. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: We will get about 4 crores on the old Niemeyer Award basis.) That is true—4 or near about 5 crores, that is 20 per cent. of the distributable surplus. Even relief under the head of the "Sales Tax" which is undoubtedly weighing very heavily at this time of high prices in certain respects could be thought of. Forgetting its legitimate claims under the Niemeyer Award, the Bengal Government may feel grateful for the dole of contribution for Civil Defence or the mercy of loans from the Central Government, but the financial halter that it is thereby wearing round its neck, it can hardly afford to forget when its indebtedness to the Government of India is expected to be so heavy as 4·75 crores by March, 1944.

In appreciating the scheme of the proposed expenditure for the coming year, I do not think a comparison with the revised estimates will be profitable inasmuch as the cyclone and flood introduced many new and temporary provisions in the revised estimates. On a comparison with the last budget estimate, however, we see that on the whole an additional expenditure of 79 lakhs has been proposed. Of this, 36 lakhs go to meet extra Extraordinary charges, but of the remaining 43 lakhs about 41 lakhs go to the Police. Public Health estimates have been reduced by 8 lakhs to make additional provision for Jails; and Education, without receiving an addition over the estimated amount for the current year, starts with a cut of 4 lakhs. We have been told that the provision of 18 lakhs for "Grow More Food" campaign has not been repeated. 18 lakhs might not have been repeated.

But has our food position become so strong that only a Directorate will be sufficient instead of large cultivation of food crops to find enough food for the people, or the control of vagrancy will adequately meet the problems

arising out of shortage and the achievements of the Director of Civil Supplies? Surely the Chief Minister as Finance Minister has reason to look ahead, otherwise his cares as the Minister for the Home and the Jail Departments may very well be multiplied.

(At this stage the House was adjourn for ten minutes.)

(After adjournment.)

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I rise to participate in the general discussion on the budget that has been presented to this House by the Province's fourth Finance Minister since the introduction of the new reforms. Within a space of six years Bengal has had no less than four Finance Ministers under the regime of its one Premier; the latest incumbent being the Premier himself, who, unable to make up his mind as to who, out of so many aspirants to whom hope had been held out, should be selected, has had to shoulder the responsibility personally.

Sir, with the improvement in the war situation in all fronts of this global war and the danger of invasion having receded to the background, it was generally supposed that a more promising and encouraging budget than that of last year would be presented to us. But that hope, unfortunately, has been dashed to the ground by the very disappointing nature of this year's proposals which reveal a sad neglect of all the nation-building departments. The whole budget speech of the Finance Minister reads like an "*assertion in apologia*" of the existence of a state of emergency due to war conditions. And this excuse is resorted to in starving such important departments like Education, Public Health, Medical, Agriculture and Industries, though money is not found wanting for the creation of a multiplicity of departments with a retenue of officers drawing rates of salaries out of all proportion to their ability and qualifications. The existence of this "war situation" has come as a blessing to the present Ministry who find it a useful cloak to cover up a multitude of their sins—both of omissions and commissions.

Sir, a lot of water has flown down the rivers of Bengal since the present Ministry came into power. Last year the plea was advanced that the Ministers were new to their offices and had no time to take stock of their bearings and formulate their policies. This year, after 15 months of their administration, a plea of the kind will no longer be tenable. Now, Sir, where and how do we stand after a year and a half of their administration? With a Ministry composed of a heterogenous group of men drawn from the ranks of various parties and blocs formed within the Legislature with no outside following in the country; with men who have cast aside their party allegiance, violated the sanctity of party creeds and given a complete go-by to election mandates, one of whom is Mr. Badruddoja who waxed so eloquent over treachery and betrayal. He was elected on the League ticket and is now the Secretary of the Progressive Assembly Party without having the honesty of resigning his seat and seeking re-election. People who live in glass houses cannot afford to throw stones. But Mr. Badruddoja has had the audacity to do so. It is a case of kettle calling the pot black. The

party is led by a man reputed to be the greatest political acrobat of the time. It was feared that self-aggrandisement, nepotism, bribery, corruption and political jobbery would be the key-notes of the administration of such a party. And that apprehension has been fully realised today. Having intrigued their way into power and office, they did not cease their activities both inside and outside the Cabinet. Their first attempt was to launch a bitter campaign of vendetta against the organisations and members whom they had so ruthlessly betrayed. The renegades from the ranks of the Congress and the Muslim League joined hands in a mean and vile attempt to undermine the influence and authority of these organisations over the local bodies of the province by gross abuses of governmental powers. Muslim League Chairmen of District Boards and Municipalities and Muslim League Presidents of District School Boards were the prime targets of their attacks. This campaign was calculated to serve a two-fold purpose. First, to wrest the control of local bodies from the hands of persons and organisations hostile to their continuance in power, and secondly to patronise their camp followers who had sold their honour and party allegiance to governmental favours. And above these considerations was the profound vanity and egoism of Mr. Fazlul Huq which cried for some relief. The fact that 13 Muslim Chairmen of District Boards out of 16 owed allegiance to the Muslim League was intolerable to him and his "progressive rump". Lust for power and fame can drive a man to frenzy. Hitler, when faced with the danger of opposition and political oblivion, did not hesitate to adopt sanguinary methods of removals of his former comrades and associates. Let it be said to the eternal credit of Mr Fazlul Huq that his methods were less sanguinary than that of Hitler's, for the Chairmen of District Boards that have been removed by brute force of authority are still happily in the land of the living.

Now, Sir, let us see what the other group of rebels have been doing. Not content and satisfied by intriguing against the organisation which they had deserted, they directed their attention towards even their own party men. After the launching of the Civil Disobedience Movement in the wake of the 8th of August Resolution of the All-India Congress Committee some members of their party clamoured for the resignation of their representatives from the Cabinet. Little did these party men dream what was in store for them. One by one, systematically, they were arrested and clapped into prison. A peculiar and inexplicable position was thus created. The Leader of the party was already in prison. The General Secretary and the Chief Whip were also put behind prison-bars, whereas the Deputy Leader and another representative were merrily continuing in office. Here then was another instance of the importation of "gestapo" methods of dealing with political rivalry, a method reminiscent of Hitler's "Blood Bath" coup when Roehm and Von Schleicher paid the extreme penalty for having tried to raise their voices against the despotic leader. In this campaign of vindictiveness the Ministry is being aided and abetted by many Government officers who in an endeavour to court official patronage, prostitute their sense of justice and equity to the whims and carprices of the Ministers. Instances

of this kind were cited on the floor of the House in September last and so I shall not go into details. A certain District Officer against whom most serious allegations were made was not only confirmed in the post of a District Magistrate but was rewarded by the conferment of a title for the part he had played in persecuting Muslim Leaguers in his district. That such kinds of revolting corrupt practices can be resorted to, indicates to what depth the present Ministry is prepared to sink in order to suppress legitimate opposition for its continuance in office and to bolster up its false claim of following in the country. That this is calculated to undermine the very basic structure of good government is ignored by those who think more in terms of "Self" than the country or its people. That this impairs the morale of the services is also deliberately ignored. Officers of better calibre and honest convictions are bound to feel aggrieved and demoralised if merit and efficiency are sacrificed at the altar of Favouritism. But what is efficiency and merit worth to Mr. Fazlul Huq and his colleagues? These cannot keep them in office and surround them with pomp and power!

Now, Sir, I come to the Home Guard Organisation for which a substantial amount was provided last year and an extra amount of 17 lakhs is being asked for this year. This organisation was called into being ostensibly for the purpose of maintaining law and order in the rural areas of the province but we have very strong and cogent reasons to believe that in actual practice it is intended to utilise the members of this organisation for party propaganda and publicity for the benefit of the present Government. We fear that it is also intended to use this organisation in an endeavour to sabotage the position of the Muslim League by organising the guards in a manner calculated to undermine the universal popularity of the one national Muslim organisation in the country. The Chief Minister described the organisation as "a voluntary force, non-political and non-party". We wish it were a true description. The Chief Minister in keeping with his reputation for veracity which he has earned for himself makes this open declaration and secretly issues a memorandum of instructions to the District Officers prohibiting the appointment of Muslim Leaguers as Captains or Vice-Captains. They were further directed to consult the executives of the local Hindu Mahasabha in the selection of the personnel of each unit of Home Guards. I ask you, Sir, in all seriousness, if this was not discrimination with a vengeance? Yet, Mr. Fazlul Huq had the audacity to assert openly that the movement was a non-party one. You debar the members of a certain political organisation from appointments to key positions; you give "*carte-blanche*" to another political party in the selection of the personnel for such appointments and yet you have the effrontery to describe the movement as non-party. Could dishonesty and political jobbery go further?

Sir, the reasons for such directions contained in the circular are obvious. The Ministers are perfectly aware of the widespread and universal popularity and strength of the Muslim League throughout the length and breadth of the province. Nator has demonstrated this in no uncertain manner. Nadia, or for that matter any constituency of this Legislature—not excluding Patuakhali—will do the same whenever the opportunity comes.

The Ministry in setting up this organisation intend to so form and constitute the various union units of Home Guards as to place men of the Hindu Mahasabha camp or their puppets in all the key positions. Thus, it is contemplated to ensure, as in the case of the Government of Bengal itself, the overpowering predominance of the Mahasabha influence in the organisation. In other words a very sinister move has been set afoot to get up a trained body of men owing allegiance to the Mahasabha with the help and support of a few miniature *Azads* and *Huqs* as nominal heads to play second fiddle to the Mahasabha tune.

Now, Sir, as to the necessity and urgency of civil defence arrangements for the rural areas there can be no two opinions. But all such arrangements must be made on strictly non-political and non-party lines, so that public confidence may be aroused which is so essential for the ensuring of the safety and security of the people. These are the reasons, Sir, why Muslim Leaguers are loathe and reluctant to join the Home Guard organisation though they are ungrudingly and unreservedly joining the A.R.P. and Civic Guard volunteer services.

(At this stage the honourable member, on reaching the time limit, resumed his seat.)

Mr. DAVID HENDRY: Sir, our detailed comments on the budget estimates were made from these benches by Mr. Gladding on Monday, and I shall confine myself to the more general remarks which we should like to make from this party.

This budget, Sir, is a grim reflection of the difficult times through which the province is passing, and on the whole I think it is an honest reflection. There is a commendable absence of the minor political embellishments which we have seen in former years, and there is, for instance, no provision for communal harmony or for a vastly increased number of parliamentary secretaries. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: No longer necessary—harmony has been achieved.)

The estimates of expenditure show on the one hand the rising tide of war expenditure and on the other hand the inevitable contraction in provision for nation-building expenditure. We cannot, however, have it both ways, and we must accept the position as it is and devote our full energies and resources to the winning of the war which means so much to us all. The expansion of nation-building activities is, we hope, only postponed for the time being, and when the war is over, we shall be able to return to nation-building with fresh energy and enthusiasm. There is, however, in this budget a lack of planning for the future which we should have liked to see and to which I shall refer later.

There are, nevertheless, two departments which are as much concerned with the war effort as they are with nation-building and with which a more progressive policy should have been followed this year. I refer to the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Industries.

The Department of Agriculture has long been the unfortunate cinderella of Government departments, and it appears still to be cast in that role if

we read the budget estimates correctly. This department has assumed vital importance in view of the food problem which confronts this province, and the department might well be expanded now for immediate purposes and future benefits.

Rupees 18 lakhs have been spent on the food campaign in the course of the year, presumably with the assistance of the Agriculture Department, and we should like to know what the results of that campaign have been. Has Government got the staff and machinery to make a success of this campaign? What do they propose to do in the forthcoming year? No provision has been made for it. Propaganda alone is not sufficient unless practical measures of assistance are forthcoming at the same time. There is nothing in the budget estimates to show that there has been any real expansion of the Department of Agriculture which is essential in our view if the "Grow-More-Food" campaign is to be successful. Has anything been done to tackle the problem of more reliable crop statistics? These, as we all know, are, in Bengal, most unreliable, and although this has been pointed out repeatedly by the Royal Commission on Agriculture, by the Paddy Enquiry Committee and by the Land Revenue Commission, we have no recollection of anything being done to improve matters. Reliable statistics are certainly an essential part of any effective scheme of increased agricultural production.

Then the circumstances of the war demand an expansion in the activities of the Industries Department with particular reference to the encouragement and assistance of small-scale industries producing articles required for the war effort or in connection with the food problem. Here again there appears to be little evidence that Government are treating this problem with energy and determination. Take, for instance, the newly-created Fisheries Department. A sum of over Rs. 1 lakh was provided in the budget estimates last year, and yet we find that out of that only Rs. 34,000 has been spent. In the forthcoming year the provision amounts to Rs. 53,000 only, and it would seem that Government, having appointed an expert to this particular department appear to have thought that their responsibility ends there. Surely the development of fisheries in this province is a matter not only of the greatest immediate importance in view of the present food situation, but is a matter fraught with the greatest potentialities for the future of the province; particularly is this so when it is remembered that the level of nutrition in Bengal is one of the lowest in the whole world. Has Government got any real plan for the development of fisheries? That we should like to know.

Of the war expenditure in 1942-43 amounting to Rs. 1,29,00,000 the greater part has been devoted to expenditure on Civil Defence and here I should like to pay a tribute to the Defence Services which have been built up in the past few years. These services, namely, the A.R.P. and other Civil Defence services, have had their baptism of fire in the seven air-raids which we have had so far in Calcutta and in these trying raids they have done very well indeed, much better than some of us expected. They, therefore, deserve our appreciation and gratitude. The test they have been put to has not been as severe as it might have been, but the manner in which

these services have functioned and the manner in which the personnel behaved should give us confidence that Calcutta has a fine body of men who will do their duty in any further ordeal that may yet lie before us and they therefore deserve a tribute from us in this House. There has been carping criticism voiced on the floor of this House regarding these services, but I submit that we can have no respect for such criticisms when it is made by those who will not themselves give their services to the community but prefer to stay aloof and cast mean aspersions upon those who sacrifice their time and energies to the service of their fellow-citizens. We hope, Sir these men who have been trained in the various defence services and have attained a high standard of efficiency will not be forgotten when the war is over or left to fend for themselves in the unemployment market. We have criticisms of our own to make with regard to defence arrangements, particularly in *busti* areas, but we shall voice our views when the appropriate demand for grant comes before the House. One other major item of war expenditure which has already been mentioned by Mr. Gladding is that of dearness allowance and I would mention this again to stress the fact that these dearness allowances are a measure of the dangerous inflation which has raised its head due to the failure of Government to control prices of the necessaries of life. I have on a previous occasion, Sir, expressed the dissatisfaction of my party with regard to Government's handling of the food problem and I hope that the period of indecision and vacillation will soon come to an end and that we shall see effective measures taken to deal with black markets and speculators.

With regard to the new taxation we cannot reasonably object to the decision to make up a small part of the deficit by the imposition of new taxes, but with the imposition of the new taxes should go hand in hand an overhaul of existing taxation to make sure that considerable evasions are not taking place. A very substantial part of the shortfall in the receipts from the Sales Tax may be due in part to over-estimation in the first instance, but a tightening up of control in the administration of this tax would, I think, bring in much better results. With regard to the new taxation we shall have further points of criticism to make when the Finance Bill comes up for consideration, but it is evident that Government have devised what they consider to be the easiest method of raising money in the present emergency irrespective of the fact whether these taxes are the best taxes or not. Furthermore, it should be mentioned in passing that an increase of 150 per cent. in the betting tax carries with it the possibility of betting being driven into underground channels and benefiting the bucket shops at the expense of the provincial exchequer. This is a point which should be borne in mind.

The general discussion of the budget, Sir, provides an annual opportunity for a review of the Government's activities during the past year and this is an opportunity of which I should like to avail myself on this occasion. I have already expressed dissatisfaction with regard to the handling of the food problem of the Government and it is only fair to state that there are other questions of policy on which we are also dissatisfied. Government

policy has appeared to us to lack decision and has been of a hesitant and negative character with regard to the many vital problems which have confronted the province during the past year.

It looks as if in reconciling the many different interests in the Government Party, Government is often unable to come to any definite decision at all, or when it does, the decision is frequently too late. Too often are administrative officers left to carry on without direction and when they do carry on they are confronted later with a repudiation of responsibilities by the Hon'ble Ministers whom they serve.

An outstanding instance of hesitation in policy has been provided by Government handling of strikes. There are provisions in the Defence of India Rules for prohibiting strikes without notice and providing machinery for the settlement of disputes. But in dealing with the Calcutta Tramway strike, for example, Government chose to ignore these provisions with the result that lightning strikes have been encouraged, and we have been subjected to one troublesome strike after another.

An even more important instance of negative and hesitating policy has been provided by Government's reaction to the disturbances promoted by the Congress resolution; and for those in power to adopt a negative policy with regard to a movement of open rebellion is surely fatal to the maintenance of law and order. The province requires positive leadership, particularly in the present dangerous war emergency, and in dealing with this rebellion the Ministry have, in our opinion, not provided that necessary leadership to the large sections of the people who are opposed to violence and sabotage. There has been an absence of forthright statement by Government in condemning this movement and of seeking the co-operation and assistance of the people in suppressing it.

On the other hand the Hon'ble Ministers have shown themselves remarkably sensitive to allegations of excesses and criticisms of the measures taken by their own officers in maintaining law and order and very slow to expose and denounce the excesses of the breakers of the law. In the adjournment motion on the Midnapore situation, half the Chief Minister's reply was devoted to defending Government officers in Midnapore and the other half was devoted to demolishing that defence by agreeing to appoint a committee of enquiry into the conduct of these same officers. By agreeing to such an enquiry, the Chief Minister has practically admitted that there is a *prima facie* case against these officers, whereas in the debate no *prima facie* case was, in our opinion, made out against them at all. We seem therefore to be drifting into a Government of impartial enquiries and party committees, which is a very unhealthy state of affairs.

We want to see more strength in the Government's handling of the problems which confront it, and although we may be entertained by skilful turning in many directions at the same time and by facing all ways at once, the process is most demoralising to everyone concerned, and in particular to the services upon whom the efficient administration of the province

depends. We had hoped that it would be possible to bring about an All-Party Government which would be able to deal boldly and confidently with the difficult problems created by the war, but that unfortunately in the past year has proved impossible.

Finally, Sir, I should like to say one word about the lack of planning for the future in the budget which has just been presented to us. The whole world is pulsating with thoughts of reconstruction and of a new and better world upon which we are to enter when the war is over. Grave though the preoccupations of the moment may be, time is being found in most countries to draw up schemes of betterment for the future. It may be that this Government thinks it has no future, but the country has a future, and it is the duty and responsibility of the Government of the day to see that provision is made for that future and to plan for it. We may not ask them to produce a Beveridge Scheme for Bengal, but we would ask them to plan for better education, better agriculture, better roads and better social services. Practical measures for betterment can and should be planned now, and we hope that whatever Government's own estimation of its probable life may be, it will set in motion forthwith the machinery for planning a better Bengal.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: May we enquire through you, Sir, how is it that Mr. Hendry has now discovered that there is no *prima facie* case made out for an enquiry into the Midnapore affairs and what is the reason for this *post mortem* suggestion? Were he and the members of his party not in the House at that time and who has inspired him to say these things today?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Dr. Sanyal, it is not for me to say.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Sir, I agree in the main with what Mr. Hendry has said, and I call upon him to implement his statement and to throw out this Ministry which is sitting as an incubus on this province. Throw it out and replace it by a National Ministry if you can. Let him join us in doing so. If this Ministry does not go out of office earlier, let him join us in this task which will be for the betterment of Bengal.

Sir, a few days ago, a scrap of paper was circulated in this House and was read out by the Chief Minister as being the budgetary statement of the Chief Minister—I will not call him, Sir, Finance Minitser because I do not want to insult his predecessors in office. (Laughter.) This budgetary statement was nothing else but a statement of the condition of the finances, of the money that was in the coffers of Government last year and how much has been spent this year, what is the revised estimate, what is the futuro estimate and so on. We had intended, Sir, in this House to start a new tradition, namely, that the budgetary statement should also be a reflection of the personality of the Finance Minister, that he should place before the House how the Government has discharged its responsibilities in the past year and what it proposes to do in the coming year and what is its programme for development. This statement contains none of these things. True, it is a reflection of the personality of the Chief Minister who has no policy of his own, and consequently it is not to be expected that this budget will

contain any details regarding policy and future reconstruction. What can, after all, the poor man say? As soon as he says anything, he is bound to be taken to task because his whole policy throughout the last 15 or 16 months has been to sail in two boats or three or four boats at the same time and somehow or other to stick to his seat. There is a Ministry over there, a conglomeration of persons who have come together without any policy except the policy of sticking fast. Let them not stick to their seats so long that like people in the Russian winter they may leave their bottoms on their seats when they attempt to get up. Sir, in the very first place we are entitled to know something regarding the political views of this Ministry. Last session this matter was discussed on the floor of this House, because the Chief Minister and his colleagues had been making statements which were contradictory to each other—signing documents produced by the Hindu Mahasabha on the one hand and coming to Dacca and making different pronouncements on the other. We are entitled to know what was and is the policy of this Ministry as regards the Congress campaign. Do they believe that the policy of His Majesty's Government or of the Government of India is a policy of repression? If so, are they entitled to continue to carry on His Majesty's Government, or is it not equivalent to fifth column tactics if they, holding such views, pretend to discharge their responsibilities? Sir, the last session ended in a fiasco. The Chief Minister managed to escape without explaining his policy. We also wish to know the views of Messrs. Santosh Kumar Basu and Pramatha Nath Banerjee, particularly of Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu who is supposed to be in charge of the Defence Co-ordination Department. True that Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu on the floor of the House dissociated himself from the Defence Department; true, that he said that all that he did was co-ordination and that he was not in charge of the Defence Department when the question of the appointment of Muslims in this department was under discussion.

Nevertheless, we are entitled to know how he retains his seat when the Chief Whip of his party and a large number of his members have been spirited away. Does he sympathise with them or does he agree with those who were taking away the members of his party? Does he imagine that by flattering the Chief Minister, by oppressing Muslims, by prostituting his position and removing Muslim chairmen of the district boards he will be able to sit there for ever? The Muslim members of the Progressive Coalition Party, whatever they may be, must in the last resort be Muslims. Some day their conscience will be awakened, some day the public will awaken their conscience, and they will realise what harm this man is doing there as a first lieutenant of the Chief Minister. Some day they will come to realise—and surely the day has arrived, for has not the Chief Minister categorically stated that the Progressive Muslim League exists only on paper, that their right seat is not there but it is with the Muslim League. Does the Hon'ble Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu think that by oppressing the Muslims in this manner he will be able to hold on? We want to know his position. He too escaped last session.

This budget should have outlined those political views before it considered other matters. We are also entitled to know what is one of the important

topics of the day—what is the attitude of the Chief Minister towards the Muslim League? Does the Ministry support the Chief Minister when he forbids meetings of the Muslim League, when he puts the members of the Muslim League in detention, when he instructs his officers to pass orders that no one shall criticise the Ministry? In these days of the Constitution, Sir, we are not allowed to criticise the Ministers for their public conduct. We are not allowed to criticise Government officers for what they have done in the course of their duties. We are entitled to know some reasons, some grounds, some justification for these monstrous orders which have been passed. We are also entitled to know why the Muslim chairmen of the district boards are being removed one by one. Why is this policy being pursued in this vindictive manner? He probably imagines that by showing his vindictiveness he will be able to terrorise the Coalition Party members who feel impelled to leave him. I had a talk with some of the Coalition Party members. They say, "We dare not do anything because he is mean and vindictive beyond imagination, and if we go against him, he will be vindictive towards us." Sir, this is not the way in which a decent Government should be carried on these days. Sir, there is one thing further that we are entitled to know. We are entitled to know something about the assurances which the Chief Minister has given from time to time on the floor of the House. We are entitled to know what has happened to those A.R.P. appointments, those 1,000 appointments, which he said were going to be made in the near future and which would be given to Muslims? Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu has told us that there is less danger of the enemy coming over. Then remove some of the old men whom you have appointed and put in men who will be able to carry on the work properly. By "old man" I do not mean the Chief Minister. I mean those superannuated gentlemen who are presiding over various sections of the A.R.P. In particular I ask them to revise the personnel of the A.R.P. Department of the 24-Parganas where Muslims have no standing at all.

We are entitled to know what has happened to the assurance regarding the Secondary Education Bill. Mr. Badrudduja's words are still ringing in my ears, words which he uttered on behalf of the Government Party, that if the Secondary Education Bill is not made law in the near future the party will go against the Ministry. What has happened even to the latest edition of the Secondary Education Bill? Under some pretext or other it has been shelved. Government announced at the beginning of the session that they intended to refer it to a new Select Committee, but even this they have dropped. What answer is there regarding the betryal of the Muslim community and the assurance which he gave to this House?

Are the assurances of the Ministry not meant to be implemented at all? Are we to ignore them? As a matter of fact, the House has ceased to set any store by the promises or assurances of the Chief Minister, and knows that they are never meant to be fulfilled. When the Chief Minister gave an assurance regarding a Midnapore Enquiry Committee, he was doing so just for the purpose of tiding over that day. We know that he never wanted to implement that assurance. This is what the Government of the day has

come to. This is the land we are living in where we are supporting a Ministry which is based on corruption, nepotism and jobbery, which gives assurances which it never intends to fulfil.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: It is a legacy from the past.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: As regards the Land Revenue Commission one day Mr. P. N. Banerji did honour to the Muslim League by calling upon it to send a representative to discuss with Government and to advise them as to what should be the policy regarding land revenue. The meeting was not held, and since then we have heard nothing at all about the subject. On the other hand, a worthless scrap of paper, something emanating from a confused mind, filled with vapours, was circulated as being the contribution of the Chief Minister towards this problem. Every newspaper, every public body, every individual who read it just threw it aside as beneath notice. We know that the recommendations of the Land Revenue Commission cannot be implemented while the war is going on; but some steps must be taken to clarify the situation and lay the foundation for future actions. I should think even from the point of view of landlords it would be better if the recommendations of the Land Revenue Commission were implemented now, because after the war, when there will be a tremendous wave of communist sentiment these landlords may find that they are being expropriated without any compensation being paid to them.

Then, Sir, what has happened to the assurance regarding the appointment of a committee of enquiry over the Dacca Jail shooting affair. The assurance was given on the floor of this House that Government had decided to appoint a committee which would be presided over by a High Court Judge. Six months later there appeared another announcement, that Government had decided to appoint a committee which would be presided over by a high judicial officer for the purpose of enquiring into the Dacca Jail shooting affair and, perhaps, six months later that announcement will be repeated.

Then there was a provision last year, a lump provision, for the promotion of communal harmony. On the floor of the House the Chief Minister gave an assurance—I do not remember whether it was the Chief Minister or Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee who gave that assurance—that not a pice of this amount would be spent until the manner in which it was going to be spent, the principle and the policy, were placed before the House and sanction was obtained. I understand that a sum of Rs. 15,000 has been spent. On what? We feared that this money was being set apart for party purposes, we anticipated that the money would be spent for nepotism and for jobbery, and, Sir, I have no doubt that the money has been so spent.

Then, Sir, we are entitled to know why there has been such criminal negligence in settling the quota in respect of jute sowings at such a late stage, when it is impossible to implement it. The whole department has been rendered absolutely futile. After the sowing has begun you declare the quota. Was there a greater joke ever perpetrated on an unsuspecting people?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Your time is over.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: May I have a few more minutes?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Not more than one minute.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: There is so much to be said. Now, Sir, what is going on at the present moment relating to the distribution shops? Favouritism is rampant. Why has not a substantial sum been allotted for the "Grow More Food" Campaign, to assist the agriculturists, to provide money for buying seeds, etc.? All these things are necessary to be shown in the budget, but there is nothing to show that these gentlemen over there have ever thought of these problems. When India is burning, when Bengal is burning, those gentlemen sit there and fiddle. (Interruption.) What they are concerned with is this: (Interruption.) This is what the Hon'ble Chief Minister says: "Whatever happens, whatever I may do, however badly I may govern this province, I know the artifice of keeping my party together. I may be guilty of nepotism and many other things, but you cannot take away a single member of my party." That is not the way in which Government should be carried on. That is an insult, if I may so call it, to the members of the party who are supporting him, whatever his failings.

(At this stage the member on reaching the time-limit resumed his seat.)

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, it is very difficult to speak after the torrential abusive eloquence of my honourable friend Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy. As one of the past Finance Ministers of this province I was expecting him to speak on the budget. He took credit for himself and he awarded discredit to his present successor in office. The budget, he said, is a simple scrap of paper. It has been produced from a muddled brain. I did expect a fine brain like that of our past Finance Minister to deal with the main provisions of the budget, but instead of finance my honourable friend felt impelled to deal with politics.

I know, Sir, his great affection and the great affection of the honourable the Leader of the Opposition for the people of the Province is too great: that affection is based on political reason. With the disappearance of the two Caste Hindu Ministers my honourable friends might come in. It is a legitimate aspiration.

Sir, on the last occasion my honourable friend Mr. Tamizuddin Khan, the past Minister for Agriculture, wanted to pillory the Ministers: he wanted to send them to the gallows. I recommend to him the second course. If the Ministers are sent to the gallows, my honourable friend will merely go away with the dignity of an executioner, he may come into the Ministry in the vacant places. The first course if adopted will leave maimed and mangled ministers crawling into their seats. There will be no chance for my honourable friend.

Sir, on the last occasion my honourable friend the Leader of the Opposition spoke about Midnapore. Midnapore looms large in public eye and amongst the various criticisms which have been levelled against relief organisations in Midnapore I have discovered my own sin with the diligent search of a negligent gleaner—four sheaves in the course of four nights'

discussion. The first sheaf I shall naturally present to my honourable friend the Leader of the Opposition, Sir Nazimuddin. He stated that in this matter of relief Government took a long time to move. Government machinery, my honourable friend is probably aware, is rather slow in locomotion, especially in the case of Hon'ble Ministers who are weighty Ministers. But in this particular instance, if my honourable friend was good enough to look at the statement which I made on the floor of the other House in November last, he would have discovered that Government did not make any delay whatsoever in the matter. Sir, I might just recapitulate what I stated there. I said that the news of the cyclone first reached the Revenue Secretary on the 19th morning. Remember this, Sir, that even the Caste Hindus—they may not be as religious-minded as others —have to observe the Durga Puja ceremony: and the cyclone came on the second and third days of the Durga Puja festival. Naturally the Caste Hindu Ministers even had to offer their worship to the goddess for the purpose of saving them from the approach of demons. (Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: From the demons of the Muslim League Party?) Who the demons are I will not attempt to describe. At that time, Sir, the Collector of 24-Parganas rang the Revenue Secretary up and gave the news of devastation caused in certain parts of the Diamond Harbour subdivision. The same afternoon information came from an R.A.F. pilot who had flown along the Howrah-Midnapore railway line. Later in the day a wireless message came from Midnapore in which it was stated that it was apprehended that certain parts of that district must have suffered badly. Immediately on receipt of this news from 24-Parganas and Midnapore steps were taken to send out relief parties. The Collector of 24-Parganas sent out a relief party on the 20th October, 1942, with foodstuff, 12,000 gallons of water, doctors and disinfectants. A wireless message was sent by the Revenue Secretary to the Collector of Midnapore to try to send relief parties from Kolaghat down the Rupnarain river to the whole coastal areas as the railway communications were cut off. Simultaneously organised relief parties were sent out from Calcutta to reach the coastal areas of Tamluk and Contai subdivisions.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Have you anything else to add to what you have already stated? We have found that all this is nonsense.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Dr. Sanyal has absorbed so much time of the House that he will perhaps be good enough to have patience to listen to me.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: But this very statement of the Hon'ble Minister has been thoroughly exposed by Dr. Mookerjee's own statement after subsequent discoveries.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Dr. Mookerjee has not contested these facts. I hope Dr. Sanyal will be good enough not to make interjections and interruptions when I am giving reply to the charges levelled against the Government by Sir Nazimuddin.

Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: On a point of personal explanation, Sir. I referred to the Minister and not to the Government.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: My honourable friend says that he referred to the Minister.

Now, Sir, the first relief party—this was not opposed by any honourable member of the House—was sent out on the 22nd October, 1942; the second party on the 24th October and the third party on the 28th October, 1942, and the Minister against whom the Leader of the Opposition must have constitutional opposition was himself present at Midnapore on the 27th October, 1942. This was exactly five days after the news had reached the Minister. The Minister was away from town as stated before. After all, a Minister also requires some rest before taking eternal rest.

Sir, the second criticism which my honourable friend the Leader of the Opposition levelled against the Minister—I did not understand that he did not refer to the Government—was that Government did not formulate a definite policy of relief measures even after they had come back from the tour. That is not accurate. My honourable friend's attention is naturally focussed on very many important matters. But if he had only seen the notices which had appeared in the press from time to time including his own Muslim League press, he would not have made that statement. A policy was formulated forthwith and that policy was executed immediately thereafter.

Sir, there was another criticism levelled and that was that private organisations were not allowed freedom of operation nor were they allowed to choose the area for relief work. I have to repudiate both the suggestions. Midnapore at that time was suffering from an abnormal political situation.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: For God's sake, don't delude the House. We know that it is an absolute lie and the Hon'ble Minister is now simply voicing his master's voice.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Dr. Sanyal refers to my master's voice. I may refer to his own master's voice not in the singular but in the plural.

As I was saying, Sir, the statement made by Sir Nazimuddin is not accurate. Unfortunately, there was also criticism levelled against the issue of permits to relief workers. These were not permits at all: these were simply identity cards issued by the Relief Department to relief workers in that area. And so far as I am aware, the Relief Department did not refuse to grant one single identity card to any one *bona fide* relief worker. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: It is a lie.)

Then, Sir, criticism was levelled against the embargo for the removal or export of rice from the Midnapore district from the first week in December. There were weighty reasons why this embargo was put by the Director of Civil Supplies, because the Revenue Department undertook the liability of feeding the distressed people in Midnapore area and on a modest estimate, in order to discharge our function, it was found necessary to supply to Midnapore in the months to come only 14 lakhs of maunds of rice. A proposal was made for the seizure of stocks there. I have scouted that proposal. In fact, non-official organisations who have worked so well at

Midnapore and to whom I pay my tribute here on the floor of the House have had immense difficulties in the purchase of foodstuff and Government have always come to their rescue and even Government have assured them of supplies at controlled prices lower than the market prices. This has involved the grant of a subvention of Rs. 1½ lakhs.

There has been another misunderstanding about the notice issued by the Additional Commissioner for relief operations relating to curtailment of gratuitous relief operations. Sir, it has been suggested in the House that the notice in question has issued out of a stony-hearted Ministry and relief operations in Midnapore are going to be stopped. That is a misconception of fact. I say, Sir, that the gratuitous relief operations will be carried on either on a decreased scale or an increased scale according to circumstances as long as required in the different areas, both by official and non-official organisations. We used to have meetings of non-official organisations every week in Calcutta and also periodically at the Government House over which His Excellency the Governor presided. In these committees it was suggested that when test relief operations are undertaken in that area—and test relief operations in that area have assumed a magnitude which is very great—then gratuitous relief operations might gradually be decreased. That suggestion had the authority of all the non-official workers in the organisations. I need not read out the testimonials which the relief committee received from leaders of non-official organisations in the presence of the head of the administration of this province. I refer to the observations made at the last meeting by Mr. N. C. Chatterjee, Mr. Monoranjan Chaudhuri of the Hindu Mahasava, and last but not the least important my honourable friend Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy. No complaint has ever been levelled against the grant or the distribution of relief in Midnapore. In fact, I have all along welcomed such criticisms. You know, Sir, the extent of damage caused and you are aware of the fact that the Government has done its very best for giving relief to the distressed people at Midnapore in an abnormal situation.

I know that money grants do not necessarily imply that the grants have been properly utilised. But may I say this, Sir, that for gratuitous relief over 20 lakhs was spent, for agricultural loans 70 lakhs has been sanctioned (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sanctioned!), for talukdari loans, 5 lakhs, for business loans, 2·8 lakhs, for medical relief and water-supply, 2·2 lakhs, for other miscellaneous, 1 lakh, for test relief, 4·5 lakhs—all told 113·5 lakhs. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sanctioned!) My honourable friend in his inimitable way is going on interjecting about sanctions implying in a sinister manner thereby that they are all paper sanctions and that none of these items have been executed. May I now, Sir, for his satisfaction, which must be the supreme satisfaction of the House, give the actual figures: for agricultural loans—amount actually spent Rs. 28,57,000; gratuitous relief —amount actually spent Rs. 21,61,000—all told more than Rs. 50 lakhs up to January, 1942.

Besides this, there was mention just now about the test relief operations. There are very big schemes, and one of the schemes is the repair and

rebuilding of embankments about 200 miles long and in the Diamond Harbour subdivision 60 miles long. My honourable friend in the Irrigation Department has undertaken this gigantic task, and it will cost the province certainly 23 more lakhs of rupees.

The medical side of the relief operations also undertook a very heavy burden and the work done up to the end of January, 1943, includes cholera inoculations Rs. 3,23,000; vaccination and re-vaccination Rs. 45,000; disinfecting tanks about Rs. 6,900; disinfecting houses Rs. 2,500; treatment of malaria cases over Rs. 16,000, treatment of diarrhœa cases Rs. 2,400; treatment of dysentery Rs. 5,350; other cases over Rs. 2,400 and cholera cases more than Rs. 500.

There was one important point on which criticism was levelled against inadequacy of water-supply and a point was attempted to be made in this House that Government had at its disposal any number of tube-wells, but the tube-wells could not be sunk. Well, Sir Government had not at its disposal any number of tube-wells. We had at our disposal about 200 tube-wells for the purpose of giving relief to the people of Calcutta if ever any occasion arose. Of this we utilised 32. We have just got a few more, so that all told we have sunk 42 tube-wells. Apart from these, the District Board of Midnapore has repaired 90 tube-wells and many refuge tanks are being built for the purpose of giving pure water-supply to the distressed areas. Besides that, certain canals have been dammed and the damming of the canals amounts to about 21 miles. Sir, I could give the House many more details about what has been done in Midnapore. If I am asked whether I am satisfied I shall say that I have not been satisfied, because in a humanitarian task like this there cannot be any satisfaction, but under the circumstances all that I say is this, that I have done my best and whether that is sufficient or not will be judged when we will gather where we are all destined to go including Dr. Sanyal.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Before my honourable friend takes his seat, I would invite his attention to the items in the supplementary budget where he mentions about the irrigation repair work and the amount spent as Rs. 4 lakhs and 98 thousand. I would like to know where he got Rs. 23 lakhs.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I shall only give one explanation, namely, that I have attempted to save the lives of 500 babies. Babies have no politics; they have not listened to the lectures of Dr. Sanyal or Mr. Suhrawardy. Many people have listened to the lectures of Mr. P. N. Banerjee (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Without profit!) including perhaps Dr. Sanyal.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Sir, I had no desire to intervene in this debate and to take up the time of the House in connection with the general observations on the budget. But my honourable friend Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy in his desire to know the reasons why some of the Chairmen of District Boards have been removed from their offices has thrown out a challenge to me to enligten him on that point. I have been looking

for an opportunity of giving out the reasons which have actuated the Government to take this step with regard to some of the District Boards when a volley of supplementary questions were addressed to me the other day on the floor of the House, but I noticed, Sir, that all these questioners were discreetly silent regarding those reasons. Questions of procedure were raised in the supplementary questions. Questions as to whether particular officials had given their blessings to these steps were also raised. But not one single questioner had the courage to put forward a direct question as to why Government had come out with these orders removing the Chairmen concerned. And today——

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: We know the reason.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: And today Mr. Suhrawardy has been bold enough to ask that question. He says "We are entitled to know why these Muslim League Chairmen have been removed".

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: Place all the papers before the House if you have the courage.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Well, Sir, the reason is that the District Boards concerned have by their own resolutions demanded the dismissal of these Chairmen.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Absolute rot.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: The reason is that the Government after the closest scrutiny into all the facts have come to the conclusion that they have been guilty of incompetence and of gross and persistent neglect of duty. Those are the reasons and if details are wanted such lurid details can be put forward on behalf of Government, if I have the time, as will convince every impartial and right-minded member of this House of the soundness of the order issued by Government.

Now, Sir, the Chairman of one particular District Board after his removal had the courage to come out in the newspapers with a sort of open challenge thereby giving an opportunity to Government to come out with their own statement giving as much details as possible, even a quarter of which would have been quite enough to justify the removal of that Chairman.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: Await the civil suit

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: For instance, it has been shown that during the regime of that Chairman while the District Board was glorying in a closing balance of Rs. 19,000, it had a liability to the extent of Rs. 1,25,000.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Just like the present budget.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: For instance, when charges of jobbery, corruption and nepotism were brought openly in newspapers mentioning the names of the Chairman's own party members who had been implicated in it, there was no attempt at any stage on those

occasions to challenge those statements or to haul up those men who had made those statements in any court of law or even to issue contradictions in the press.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: May I request on behalf of my party that on this question two days may be allotted by Government? Either an impartial Tribunal may be appointed or two days may be allotted by Government so that we can discuss the matter. Will they accept the challenge?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You wanted replies from the Hon'ble Minister and you must have patience to hear them.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: In that speech which is known as the budget speech and which is nothing but a scrap of paper some indication of this policy which they are pursuing ought to have been there and reasons ought to have been given in that speech. This is not the time to go into that.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order. The Hon'ble Minister is replying to your points. On some other occasions you will also have opportunities to reply to the Hon'ble Minister.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the cry has been raised that the Ministry in their perfidy and in their mischief-making propensity have persecuted these Muslim League Chairmen and the permanent officials have had nothing to do with it. That was the initial cry. When it was disclosed that the permanent officials also having been disgusted with the vagaries of these Chairmen sided against them, the cry was at once raised that that was so because they were Hindu officials. When it was shown that the Muslim officials had also——

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: It is a lie. We never raised such a cry. It is your own fabrication.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order. Mr. Suhrawardy, you should know that when I am on my legs you should at once resume your seat. A member cannot address another member. If you have got to say anything you should address me. But you did not do so. If you rise on a personal explanation and if the member does not give way, you will have to wait. If he gives way, then you are entitled to give your personal explanation.

Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: We have never for a moment said that the Government officials were oppressing our Muslim League Chairmen because they were Hindus. The Hon'ble Minister himself is saying that.

The Hon'ble Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Mr. Suhrawardy was playing a truant from this House when his worthy co-member or colleague Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi openly thought fit in this House to charge the Commissioner of the Burdwan Division with partiality because he was a Hindu officer. Mr. Suhrawardy ought to be ashamed of his conduct in challenging my statement. Now, Sir, first of all it was a charge against the Ministry. They have been constantly shifting the ground. When it came to the question of officials, some were branded as "Hindu officials" and

partial for that reason. When they were confronted with the unmistakable fact that some Muslim officials also had sided against corruption, jobbery and nepotism and had voted against these Chairmen, they said that these officials had been pursuaded by the Ministry. Sir, then again they raised the question, with regard to the European official, whether he had also given his blessing to the removal of a Chairman. When they were told that he had done so, the question was raised "was it in writing" and when they were told that it was in writing, they kept chup. Even then, I don't think that they are likely to keep chup over the matter because they have at last discovered some stick to beat the Ministry with and with which they can carry on throughout this session. They are going to make that the principal plank of their platform during the session and indications of that were coming even before the present session came into existence. In their own party meetings they had started beating the drum "This is going to be our principal plank during the coming budget session". Sir, when some people are caught on the high way, they probably consider it prudent to shout with the innocent and that is the kind of cry which has been raised by my friends over these when they have been caught red-handed. When the time comes the whole history of these transactions which led to the majority of members in these respective District Boards to get absolutely fed up with the vagaries and misdeeds of their respective Chairmen, will be disclosed to the whole world. Even today, it could be done if I had the time at my disposal.

Now, Sir, I remember that although the Hon'ble Mr. Suhrawardy as he then was, was not the presiding deity over the Local Self-Government Department in the past Ministry his Roman hand was seen on many a file relating to the Local Self-Government Department because he was trying to rule that department from his political position as the Secretary of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League. Every file relating to nomination and even to the election of Chairman used to pass through him and the signature of the Hon'ble Minister in charge had to be vetoed, sanctioned or confirmed by the Secretary of the Provincial Muslim League presiding over another Government department. That was what used to happen then and today it is they who are the loudest in their complaint that everything is being done from the political point of view.

Sir, one of the things which struck me when I came to be in charge of this department was a resolution that was passed by the Government during the regime of the last Ministry that they would be entitled to give out directions to the local officers as regards the nominations which were to be made by them; not only that, the elections of Chairmen were also to be done under their guidance and under their inspiration. All these are on record and in cold print. Is it now for them to come forward with this kind of complaint, does it lie in their mouth? With regard to one of these Chairmen who have been removed on the application of the District Board, it is not only an open secret but it is absolutely known as a fact that at the time of his election the then Home Minister Sir Nazimuddin sent out his direction to the local officers that they must see that his nominee was installed in

the Chairman's *guddi*. (A VOICE: Scandalous!) And the officers concerned most humbly and faithfully carried out his behest and that Chairman was elected by the casting vote of a certain Subdivisional Officer who was presumably trembling in his shoes because the all-highest in the Home Department had sent down his word. I say, Sir, that this is their own record, and now it is they who are coming forward and shouting the loudest because they have been exposed in this manner. I do not want to say anything more.

(The House was adjourned for ten minutes.)

(After adjournment.)

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, in the falling shades of night of a pleasant Indian evening in early spring it would be the height of impropriety to indulge in the language of invectives and imitate the inimitable Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy in reply to the remarks he has made.

Sir, there are certain individuals who cannot in spite of themselves commit the unpardonable folly of giving away the cause by relying too much on their self-importance. I can forgive Mr. Suhrawardy for the language he has used because I am convinced that it comes from the innermost recess of an anguished heart. It is the language similar to what a condemned criminal on the verge of execution levels at the judge who may have passed the sentence.

Sir, I therefore do not wish to waste my time and the time of the House by following him into a detailed examination of the charges levelled against me personally and against the Ministry. Sir, Mr. Suhrawardy, in the midst of a speech of one of my honourable friends, suddenly rose to his feet and discovered to his surprise that he had used some intemperate language. He came forward perhaps to express regret but he coupled it with an appeal to me to cease oppressing his community. Well, Sir, if by that Mr. Suhrawardy means to imply that my community is different from his or the community he represents is different from the community I represent, I am prepared to accept the implications of that remark. Let me tell Mr. Suhrawardy that having had the advantage and the privilege and the supreme good fortune of having been born in a respectable Muslim family and bearing a Muslim name, he has got to do many things before he can claim to be a Muslim.

I need not, as I had intended, proceed further on these lines, but I will come straight to a discussion of the budget and reply very briefly to the remarks that have been made.

My friend, Dr. Sanyal, began by remarking that the members of the Cabinet—the Ministers—were conspicuous by their absence when the budget was being discussed. Sir, I attended very attentively on the first day and I found that there was no discussion of the budget but washing of dirty linen on the floor of the House. That was not a budget discussion and therefore I thought it best to stay away from a scene which is disgusting to human feelings. But my friend will bear me out when I say that whenever there was a real discussion of the budget, the Ministers were present. (Cries of "No", "No", from the Opposition Benches.)

We paid that compliment to Dr. Sanyal whose speech we all listened to with rapt attention from beginning to end; we listened to the speech of Mr. Gladding; we listened to the speech of Mr. Wordsworth; we listened to the speech of Mr. Hendry; we listened to the speeches of Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhuri and others. Whenever there was well-informed criticism of the budget, we thought it our duty to listen because we knew we had got to reply. But we were not here when there was no discussion but simply abuses heaped not with the object of giving any constructive suggestions through well-informed criticism, the object being to utilise this opportunity for carrying on poiltical propaganda.

Now, Sir, there are certain matters on which I might reply very generally. My friend, Mr. Mohammed Ali, has remarked that during these last 15 months we have not been able to make out a plan for carrying on administrative reforms or, at any rate, for taking in hand measures for the improvement of the administration or to rally all the forces of the country. We confess, Sir, that the times have been so abnormal and the strain on our resources from all sides have been so great and so insistent that we found it impossible for us to bring about anything like a plan in order to help the nation-building departments or to carry forward the schemes which had already been undertaken by previous Governments towards the amelioration of the state of affairs of the people of the country.

Sir, from the moment this Government took office, we were faced with the problems arising out of the declaration of war by Japan and we had only been just a few months carrying on or trying to make ourselves familiar with our surroundings when the rush of Japanese invasion reached our very doors and necessitated the promulgation of orders by the Central Government which interfered with the free flow of our financial plans and programmes. I will have something to do with this subject when I speak on the food situation in Bengal, but suffice it to say at the present moment that in April when we began this financial year dark and ominous clouds were lowering over the political horizon of Bengal and we did not know when and in what direction or directions the storm would burst over us and we had therefore had every reason not to embark on any undertaking which might involve Government in substantial financial outlay. That is the reason why the whole budget seems to be disappointing from the point of view that there is nothing like well-planned schemes or nothing like any attempt to carry forward the schemes which have already been put into execution by previous Government. Sir, I will be very brief and I will simply make certain comments on some portions of the speech of my honourable friends who have in the course of their speeches been good enough to offer criticisms which really call for a reply.

This year the preoccupation of many members of this House with the food problem and the fact that the general discussion on the budget has been sandwiched between two parts of the food debate have tended to turn the budget debate into a supplementary debate on the Government's

food policy. Of the few general criticisms made in the course of the budget debate that genuinely concern themselves with the policy underlying the coming year's estimates, there are two with which I must deal.

The first is that these estimates do not provide for any expansion of our nation-building departments. That criticism is true: the coming year's budget does not provide for an expansion of our nation-building departments. For some time past it has been the policy of Government not to undertake any new financial commitment that is not necessitated by our civil defence repuirements or for the effective prosecution of the war. This is the deliberate policy of the present Government, but I contend that there is in reality no choice. I contend that members who speak glibly of proceeding with plans of expansion prepared in happier times are not serious or are deceiving themselves by refusing to look facts in the face. They overlook that we are borrowing to meet a large part of our current revenue expenditure; and borrowers, like beggars, cannot be choosers. The Central Government has agreed to lend us money to meet our share of the poolable civil defence expenditure. That does not mean that at this juncture money would be forthcoming from the same source for such postponable expenditure as the expansion of primary education. In some quarters it is suggested—how seriously, I cannot say—that we should borrow money in the open market for this purpose. Sir, I can assure the House that any attempt to borrow money in the open market at this time in order that there may be no slowing down of our nation-building activities would be a dismal failure.

Since the middle of 1941 we have had to divert lakhs of rupees from nation-building to civil defence, as Mr. Gladding said "expenditure on nation-building is by force of circumstances being pushed more and more into the background there to mark time until hostilities cease or until some miracle of increased revenue makes it possible for them to march forward again". It is regrettable—I regret it as much as any member of this House—but this is a matter beyond our control—and commonsense and necessity alike demand that we should shorten sail until the storm has passed.

The second criticism is on somewhat similar lines. It is to the effect that under some of the nation-building departments the provision made in the coming year is actually smaller than that made in the current year's budget. That is true of two heads: Education under which the provision for 1943-44 is Rs. 1 crore 75 lakhs against a budget provision of Rs. 1 crore 79 lakhs in the current year; and Public Health under which the provision for 1943-44 is Rs. 40 lakhs against Rs. 48 lakhs in the current year's budget.

The decrease under "Education" is due in the main to the reduction in the provision under "Grants to local bodies for Primary Education". It has been found that a number of School Boards have accumulated very considerable balances—on the 31st March, 1942, the sum of the accumulated balances of all the District School Boards amounted to cover Rs. 55 lakhs—and at a time when the province has to borrow to meet current

expenditure, no one in his senses will suggest that we should borrow more heavily so that certain School Boards may accumulate even larger balances.

The decrease under "Public Health" is due in the main to the smaller provision under "Rural Water-supply". In the current year's budget there was a provision of Rs. 10 lakhs. It is estimated that the expenditure this year will not exceed Rs. 3 lakhs. The reason is the scarcity of tube-well materials. In the coming year's budget we have provided Rs. 5 lakhs. It is doubtful whether it will be possible to obtain materials for sinking tube-wells even up to this reduced provision.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: What about tank improvement? Why not improve the tanks?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: That is certainly a very useful suggestion and certainly we will have to consider this. I think it is being considered by the department concerned.

More than one member has commented upon the reduction in the provision for the free distribution of quinine. The coming year's budget includes a provision of Rs. 5½ lakhs on this account against a provision of Rs. 6 lakhs in the budget of the current year. The reason for the reduced provision is as follows: After the capture of Java the Government of India took control of all stocks of quinine in the country. We have been told that annual allotments will be made to the provinces from these stocks on the basis of 75 per cent. of the average consumption of the last three years. It will be seen therefore that it is the reduction in the quantity of quinine likely to be available to us that accounts for the reduced provision.

Sir, I wish to say a few words regarding the advance of Rs. 50 lakhs to the Director of Civil Supplies for the purchase of food grains. I have said that the general discussion on the budget this year has tended to become a supplementary debate on Government's food policy. My colleague, the Nawab Bahadur of Dacca, will in due course reply to the alleged shortcomings of our food policy and I have no wish to steal his thunder. There is however one criticism to which it will be appropriate that I should reply. Strictly speaking, it is a matter that concerns the revised estimates and the supplementary demands for the current year rather than the estimates for 1943-44. I refer to the advance of Rs. 50 lakhs to the Directorate of Civil Supplies for the purchase of food grains. One member——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Without your knowledge?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I have come to know now.

One member, my esteemed friend Mr. Jalan, who should know better, has compared this to the advance made in 1940 for the purchase of jute by Government. Sir, there is no resemblance whatever between the two advances. In the case of our jute purchase the purchase once made, the money advanced was locked up and the whole object of the purchase required that it should remain so locked up. In the present case this

Rs. 50 lakhs has been advanced as working capital. This working capital may be turned over many times and may be sufficient to cover transactions representing twenty, perhaps thirty, times the amount of the advance. If however events prove that a larger working capital is necessary to make the operations of the Directorate of Civil Supplies effective, a further advance will be forthcoming.

Before leaving this subject, I should like to say that I note, with satisfaction, the implied assurance from the Leader of the European Group that his party will not grudge any additional provision that Government may find necessary for the expansion of the operations of the Directorate of Civil Supplies. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Provided Europeans are selected.) I can assure Mr. Hendry that while the department has had many difficulties to contend with, the shortage of funds has not been one of them.

Maulvi Muhammad Israil, the member for Kishoreganj South who is also a member of the Mymensingh District School Board, complained bitterly that any part of the provision for "Grants to Local Bodies for Primary Education" should have been reappropriated or surrendered. He alleged that at the end of the present financial year the closing balance of the Mymensingh District School Board will be nil.

I have referred to the statement of the grants recommended by the Director of Public Instruction for the current year and there I find that the additional grant recommended for the Mymensingh District School Board is Rs. 2,04,000. With this grant on the Board's own estimates the closing balance for the current financial year will be Rs. 4½ lakhs—sufficient to meet expenditure for at least four months.

I now come to another portion of the speech of Mr. Gladding wherein he has referred to the under-estimate of revenue receipts. Mr. Gladding has suggested that our estimates under certain Revenue heads will prove to be underestimates: I may say that the Finance Department itself shares Mr. Gladding's opinion. I should explain that the bulk of the final estimates of what we know as the 1st edition of the budget is framed towards the end of December and members of the House who were in Calcutta during the last ten days of December will understand why after the X'mas Eve raid the Finance Department thought it prudent to allow for some falling off in the receipts during the last three months of the year under "Excise", "Entertainment Tax" and "Betting Tax". Since then, however, thanks very large largely to the skill and prowess of the R.A.F., night fighters—we have been spared further raids on a scale sufficient to bring any appreciable exodus or any dislocation of the normal life of the city; and as February's moon wanes without a single raid, the anxious draw breath more freely; the timid have taken courage and are returning; and the labourer, whom we apprehended might take to his heels, continues to frequent the grog shop; the race-goer his "bookie" or "the tote" and film fan his cinemas; all to the benefit of the revenues of the province.

The net result however of slight larger receipts under these heads will only be that we may have something in hand from which to meet the subvention to the Calcutta Corporation for which, as I have stated, pending Mr. Gurner's report our estimates make no provision.

Mr. Gladding has referred to the exemption in section 5 (*2*) (*iii*) of the Sales Tax Act in favour of "sales to the Supply Department of the Government of India". It ought not to be necessary for me to remind the House that this exemption was included in the Statute in the interests, not of the Government of India, but of the Bengal dealer, who, it was contended, would but for this exemption be at a disadvantage *vis-á-vis* his competitors outside the province.

I now come to another portion of Mr. Gladding's speech in which he referred to the Civil Defence Measures undertaken by the Corporation. Mr. Gladding has referred to the brief summary of the "Delhi Agreement" for the allocation of civil defence expenditure given on page 77 of the Red Book and enquires whether the Government of Bengal is going to bear the other two-thirds of civil defence measures undertaken by the Calcutta Corporation. The position will become clearer if I quote the following extract from the Government of India's letter of 24th January, 1942, in which the terms of the Delhi Agreement are embodied:—

"In respect of the schemes for the Calcutta Corporation it is understood that Bengal Government have come to a special arrangement with the Corporation under which the Bengal Government are advancing the total cost and the question of the amount to be paid towards these schemes by the Corporation has been left for settlement at some future date. In respect of these schemes the Government of India are prepared to contribute one-third of the total cost, the whole expenditure to be kept outside the scheme now proposed for civil defence expenditure and no share of any subsequent recoveries to go to the Centre".

The bulk of the measures falling within the scope of this special section of the Delhi Agreement were undertaken by the Engineering Departments of the Calcutta Corporation and in many cases merely involved the purchase of large reserves of stocks of materials necessary for the repair of the Corporation's utility services: these stocks will, we hope, have considerable post-war value and will not, like so much of our A.R.P. expenditure, represent a dead loss.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Your time is over. I can only allow you two minutes more.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I shall conclude now. In charging Government with progressively bad budgeting Dr. Sanyal is somewhat anticipating the debate on the supplementary estimate for 1942-43. I do not propose to deny that there has been heavy unbudgeted expenditure during the current year. When the demands for extra grants are moved later in this session, I hope my colleagues will be able to satisfy the House that there were good and sufficient reasons for the additional expenditure represented by these supplementary demands, but I would like to point

out to Dr. Sanyal that when he speaks of 3 crores 22 lakhs of unbudgeted expenditure and implies that our estimates of expenditure for 1942-43 are likely to be wide of the mark by 20 per cent., he is guilty of confusing expenditure outside revenue account with expenditure of revenue account.

Of the total demand included in the supplementary estimate, no less than 1 crore 75 lakhs is outside revenue account. As the Minister in charge of the Finance portfolio it will fall to my lot to move the two supplementary demands which make up that sum of 1 crore 75 lakhs; and it will be sufficient this afternoon to explain that 53 lakhs under the head "Interest-free Advances" is for the purchase of foodgrains by the Director of Civil Supplies. The supplementary demand under "Loans and Advances by Provincial Governments" includes some 50 lakhs for agricultural loans to the cyclone-affected areas of Midnapore and the 24-Parganas and over 16 lakhs for advances to the Calcutta Corporation. Dr. Sanyal could hardly have expected the Finance Department to have foreseen in January, 1942, the unprecedented cyclone which swept across Midnapore in October of last year; nor, I think, that last April's exodus from Calcutta would reduce the finances of the Calcutta Corporation so seriously that we should be compelled to make advances to the extent of 16 lakhs in order to enable it to carry on.

Members will recall that during the current financial year expenditure on Revenue account is not expected to exceed our budget estimate by more than 46 lakhs—an increase, I am glad to say, of only 3 per cent. above our original estimate of 16¾ crores; an increase that in times such as those through which we are now passing certainly does not deserve the somewhat sweeping condemnation which Dr. Sanyal has sought to heap on the Budget.

Sir, before I resume my seat I wish to say one word expressing my deep regret for what I said about Mr. Suhrawardy. It was extremely unIslamic. I hope you will please expunge the first portion from my speech.

Adjournment.

It being 7-40 p.m., the Assembly was adjourned till 3-45 p.m. on Thursday, the 25th February, 1943, at the Assembly Hall, Calcutta.

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